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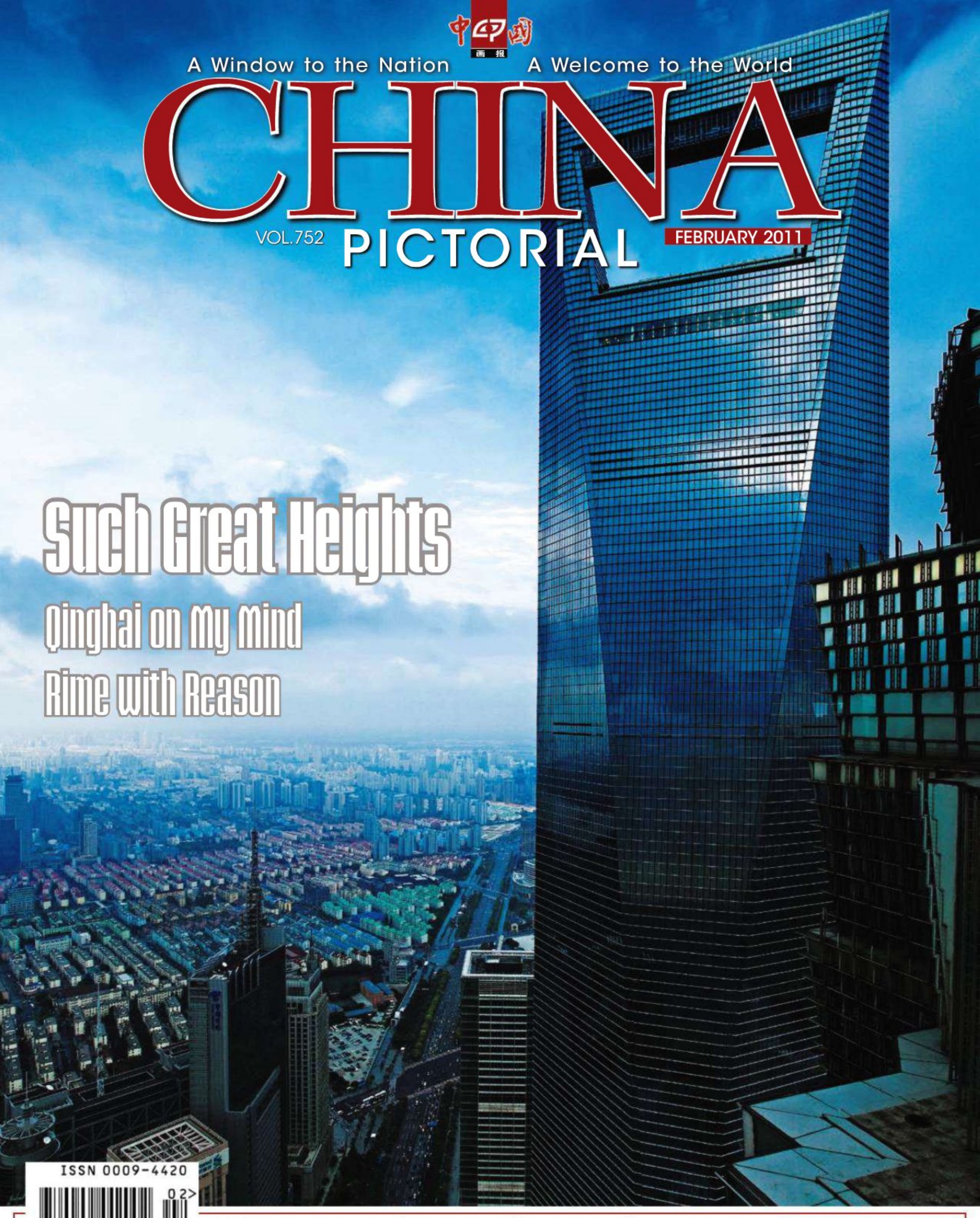

中国画报

A Window to the Nation A Welcome to the World

CHINA PICTORIAL

VOL.752

FEBRUARY 2011

Such Great Heights

Qinghai on My Mind

Rime with Reason

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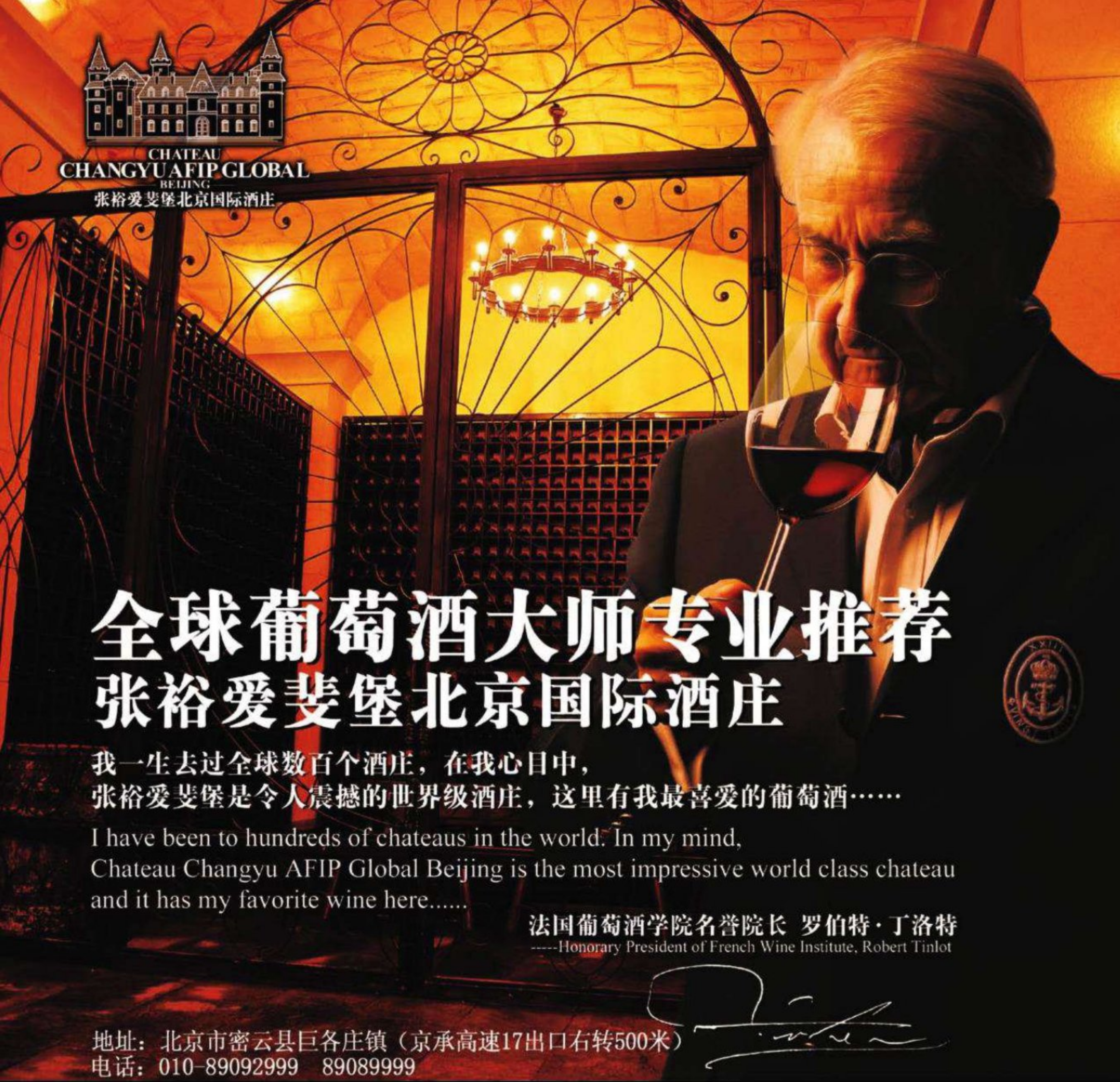

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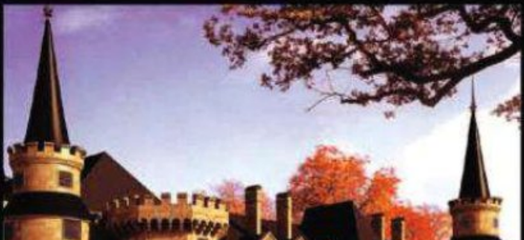

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FEBRUARY 2011

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The 492-meter-high Shanghai World Financial Center. by Fang Shuo

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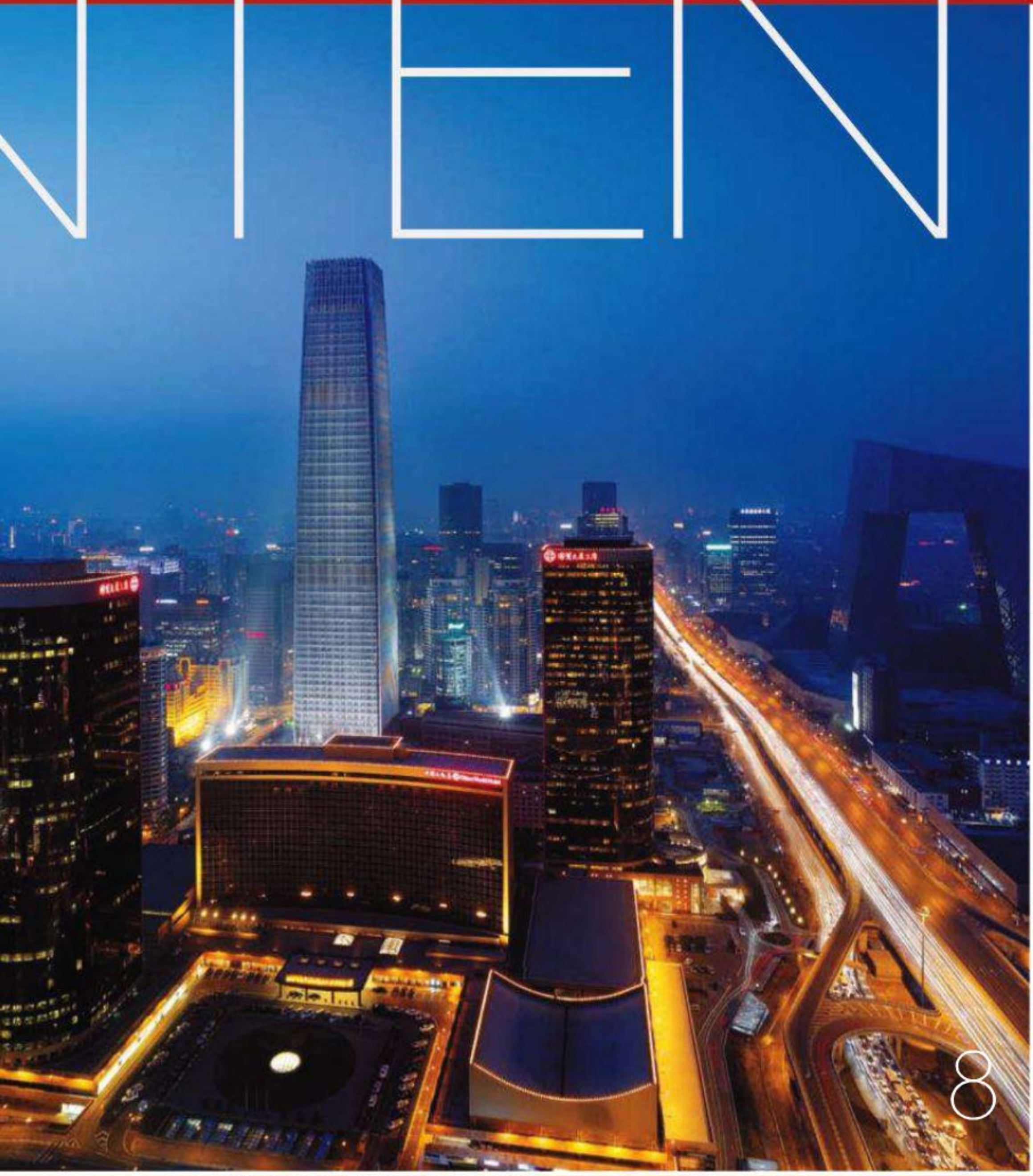
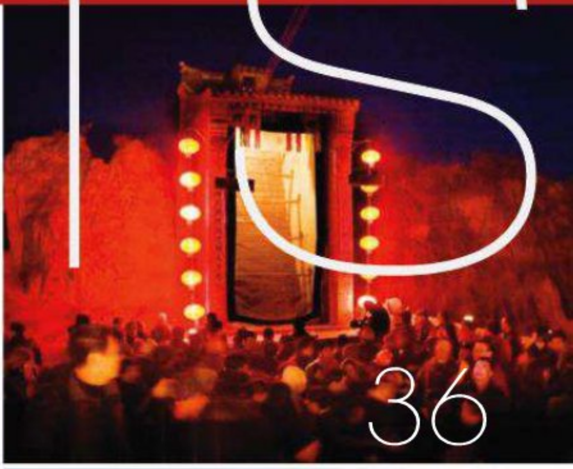
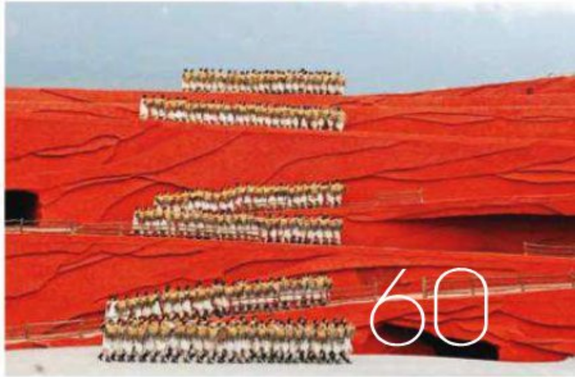
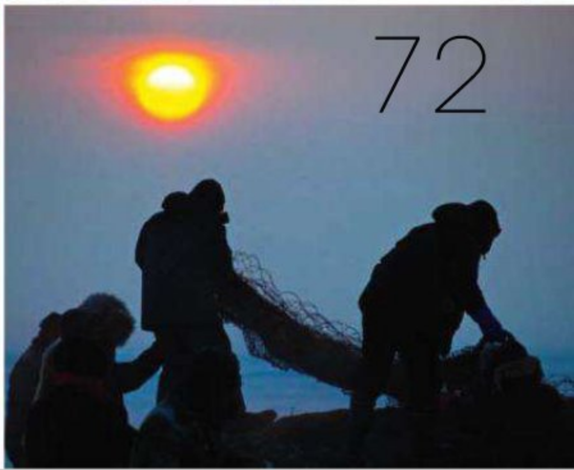








Beijing
Guangzhou

CHINA PICTORIAL

Travel Destination of the Month

Spring Festival in Guangzhou

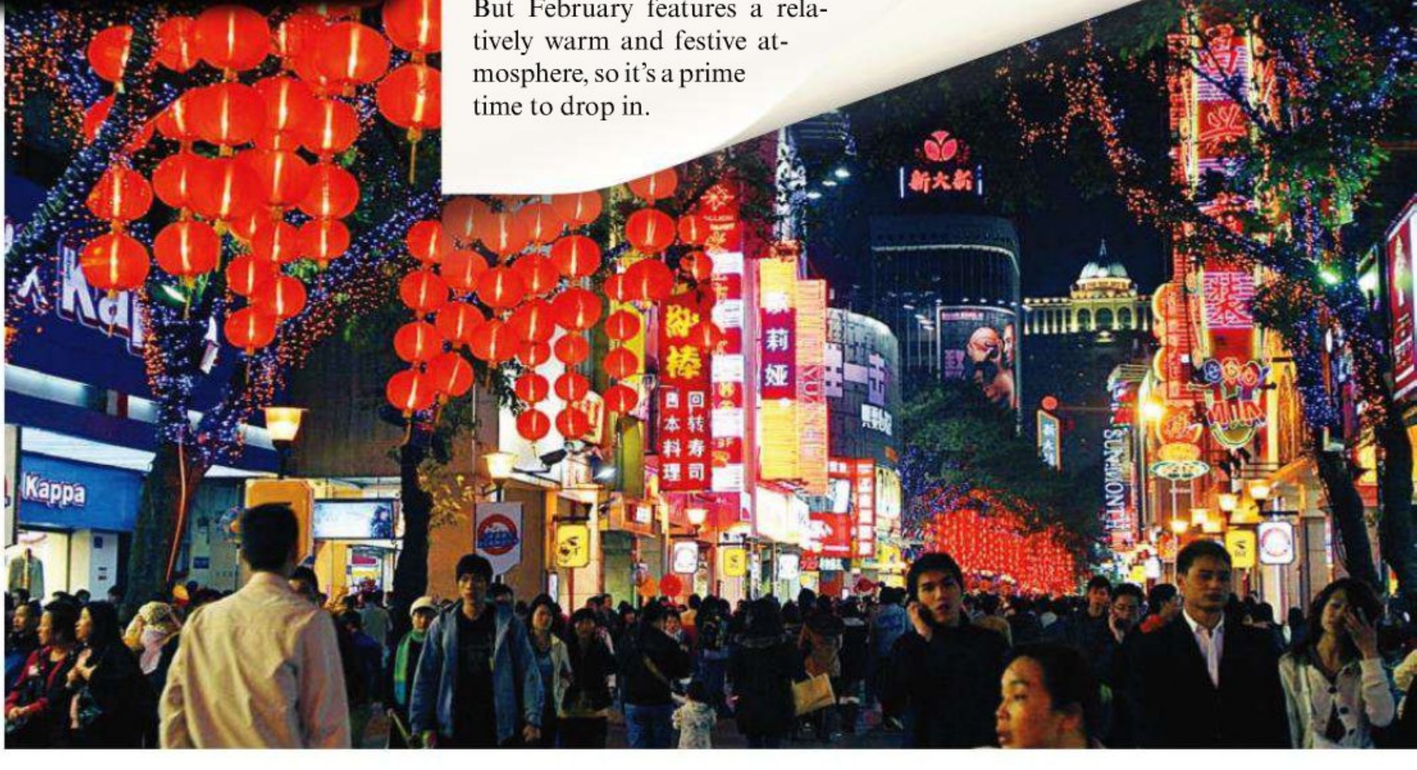
Technology continues to make the world a smaller place, and people across the globe seem to be becoming more familiar with the most important Chinese day – the Spring Festival. The first day of the Year of the Rabbit falls on February 3. Although every Chinese person enjoys the same holiday, celebration varies across the country and the world. For tourists hungry for more traditional customs, Guangzhou is a must visit. The most classic and unique ceremony in Guangzhou during the period is the "Spring Flower Fair." It is drastically different than anything that can be found in northern regions.

Since Guangzhou rests within the subtropical zone, flowers can grow and blossom even in winter. Most years, the fair opens a few days before Chinese New Year's Eve, but many choose the Eve to visit. Tourists planning to attend on that day should be well prepared for heavy crowds.

Flowers are far from the only product available at the market. The venue is full of windmills, both in hands and for sale. The symbolism behind the windmill is simple. Since a Chinese phrase speaks of "turning (for good) fortune" and the words for "turn" and "rotate" share the same Chinese character, people believe that the spinning spurs good fortune in the coming year. Other traditions abound: Hanging red lanterns, for example, is a common practice to bring good fortune. The Chinese character meaning "fortune" is hung on home doors and walls upside down because in Chinese, the pronunciation of "upside down" sounds similar to "arrival." Inverting the character is thought to help welcome fortune's arrival.

Actually, Guangzhou is a great place to visit any time of the year. But February features a relatively warm and festive atmosphere, so it's a prime time to drop in.

Liede Bridge at night, Guangzhou. CFP



Local residents create big crowds during Spring Festival in Guangzhou. CFP

Harbin Ice Festival

On January 5, China's northeastern city of Harbin kicked off the 27th annual Ice and Snow Festival, transforming its abundance of snow and ice into beautiful sculptures.

Expected to welcome millions of tourists from across China as well as increasing numbers of international visitors, the festival lasts for three months.

Transportation Peak

The annual transportation peak caused by traditional Lunar New Year, started on January 19, with an expected 2.85 billion trips over 40 days.

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) predicted that this year journeys by train, bus, and air during the season, commonly known as *chunyun* (spring transportation), would increase by 11.6 percent over last year.

Hainan Shopping Rebates

Beginning January 1, overseas tourists visiting Hainan Province can reclaim taxes paid for purchases of clothes and cosmetics as part of plans to turn the tropical island into an international travel and shopping paradise.

The policy, approved by the State Council, applies to travelers from foreign countries and residents of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao who buy goods totaling more than 800 yuan in a single day at a single department store in Hainan.

Selling Out

With the year-end travel season already in full swing, many Singaporeans have made plans to do more sightseeing during the Lunar New Year holiday.

With just weeks to go, tour packages for the February festival period are selling out fast, with some travel agents reporting up to 80 percent of packages booked.

Freest Economy

Hong Kong has been ranked as the world's freest economy for the 17th consecutive year in the *2011 Index of Economic Freedom* rankings released by the Heritage Foundation and *Wall Street Journal* on January 12.

The city scored an 89.7 to remain in the top position it has held since the index was first published in 1995. Singapore and Australia remained in second and third place, respectively, where they were last year.

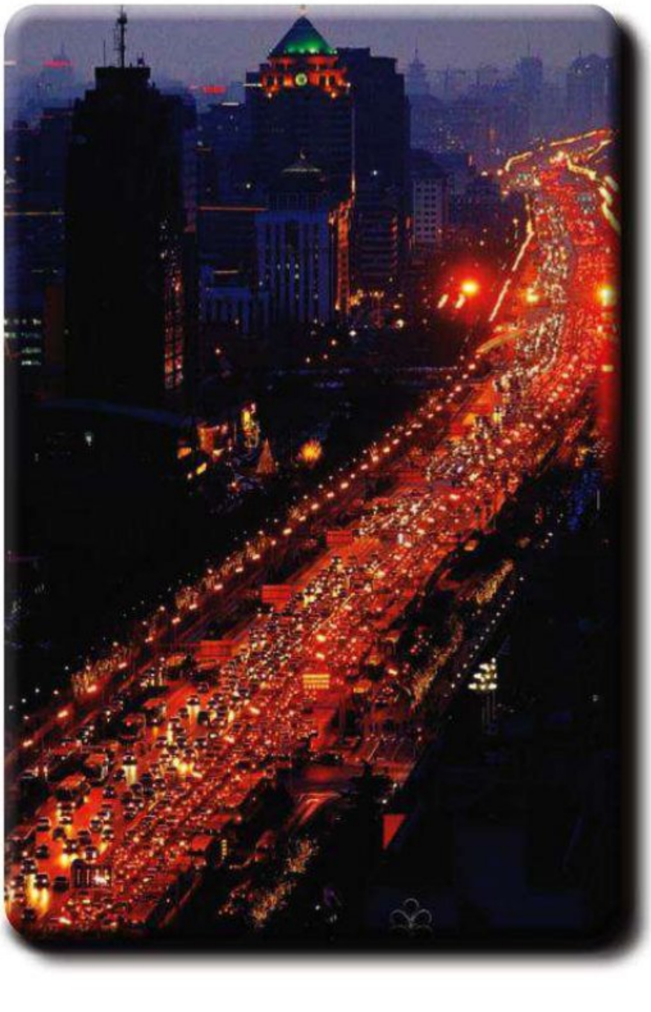
Forgotten Promises

Damien Hirst's controversial work hit shores of Hong Kong on January 18 with the unveiling of his "Forgotten Promises" exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery. The exhibition runs from January 18 to March 19.

Carrying the title of the most lucrative living artist, Hirst has developed familiar iconography – the skull, the diamond and the butterfly – to explore fundamental ideas about existence.

Damien Hirst of England poses with his work in Hong Kong. IC

A Chinese man rests in a cabinet-sized room at China's first capsule hotel in Shanghai. ***IC***



Traffic jam during evening rush hour, Beijing. ***IC***

Capsule Hotel

China's first capsule hotel opened in Shanghai on January 10 to cater to budget travelers.

The 300-square-meter hotel consists of 68 capsules, each 1.1 meters high, 1.1 meters wide and 2.2 meters long. The concept originated in Japan, and each capsule is equipped with independent sockets, clocks, lights, TV and wireless internet.

The basic rate is 28 yuan per person for checking in, plus an additional four yuan an hour. And the hotel also offers a package of 88 yuan for 24 hours. Like most capsule hotels in Japan, the Shanghai business allows men only.

Easing Traffic Congestion

Since the turn of 2011, Beijing car buyers have participated in a lottery to obtain a car license plate because the Beijing municipal government is limiting the annual issuance of plates to 240,000 and implementing strict traffic control measures to ease the city's traffic.

Private car buyers will receive 88 percent of the city's new license plates. Two percent will be for commercial use, and the remaining 10 percent will go to companies, government institutions and other organizations.

In 2010, more than 700,000 new cars were sold in Beijing, bringing the city's total automobile population to more than 4.7 million.

Confucius Statue

Unveiled on January 11, Tian'anmen Square has a new sentinel in the form of a larger-than-life statue of the ancient sage Confucius to watch over visitors.

The 9.5-meter bronze statue, outside the National Museum of China, is the latest testament to the philosopher's comeback, riding the wave of efforts to promote him as a symbol of traditional Chinese culture.

Believed to be born in 551 B.C. in Qufu of Shandong Province, Confucius is widely regarded as a symbol of Chinese civilization around the globe.

A 9.5-meter statue of Confucius stands in Tian'anmen Square. ***IC***

Auto Design Awards

The awards ceremony for the Fifth Auto Design Competition, hosted by china.com, was held recently in Beijing. With "looking for classics" as its theme, the competition combined internet voting and expert opinions. Ultimately, only 11 out of hundreds of competitors were honored. After the ceremony, a report on China's 2010 auto consumption credit was also released.

A group photo of the winners.

Laba Festival

With the arrival of the last month of every lunar year, the holiday spirit floods the land. The Laba Festival marks the official start of Spring Festival.

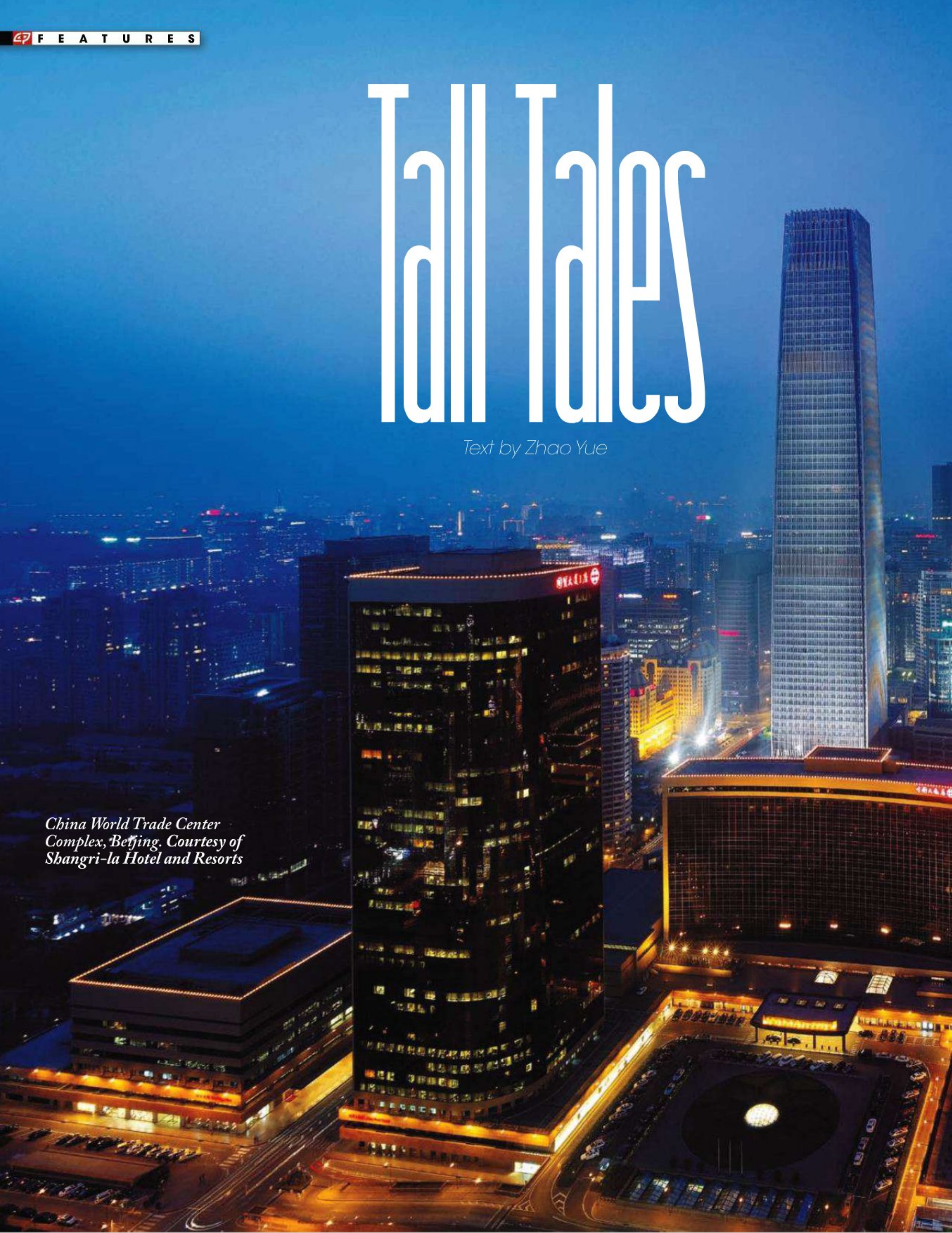
Traditionally, Chinese people eat Laba porridge on Laba Festival, which fell on January 11 this year. Its name literally refers to the eighth day of the twelfth month on the Chinese lunar calendar.

Laba porridge, composed of fresh paddy rice, dried fruits and various nuts, is cooked to celebrate the festival which commemorates the day of Buddha's enlightenment.

Kindergarten children queue up in front of the Shaolin Temple for free Laba porridge, as tradition goes in Quanzhou, Fujian Province. ***IC***

Tall Tales

Text by Zhao Yue



China World Trade Center Complex, Beijing. Courtesy of Shangri-la Hotel and Resorts

For those living in Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, the end of 2010 brought big news when the ground was broken for the 606-meter-tall Wuhan Greenland International Financial Center, planned to become the third tallest structure in the world. If completed today, it would be the world's second tallest building, eclipsed only by Dubai's 828-meter-tall Burj Khalifa, but Shanghai is currently building a 632-meter tower, which will make the Wuhan building rank number three. Its developer, Shanghai-based Greenland Group, has plans for the multifunctional property to include high-end hotels, a conference center, shopping areas, and apartments.

Fueled by economic progress and the honor such magnificent structures bring, more and more Chinese cities are finding ways to raise skyscrapers, a direct and plain method to demonstrate their internationalization. Skyscraper fever is more of a social mentality than an architectural phenomenon.

上|海|中|心
Shanghai Tower

Urban high-rises bring a new brand of loneliness. CFP

Shanghai Park Hotel, once the tallest building in Asia, has long been dwarfed by its newer neighbors. CFP

The banks of the Pearl River, Guangzhou City. CFP

Love for Skyscrapers

The Chinese love affair with super high-rise buildings can be traced back decades. When Shanghai Park Hotel was completed in October 1933, it was inarguably the tallest building in Asia. The hotel included 24 floors, although two were underground, and it reached 84 meters into the sky, 11 meters taller than the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation building, then the tallest in Hong Kong. For 50 years, the hotel remained the tallest in Shanghai.

Over time, Shanghai's skyline has changed more than residents of 1933 could imagine. On August 30, 2008, the Shanghai World Financial Center opened as scheduled. The 492-meter structure with 101 floors towers over surrounding paltry buildings. Although currently the tallest in Shanghai, its title won't be held for long, as the 632-meter-tall Shanghai Tower is scheduled to be completed in 2013.

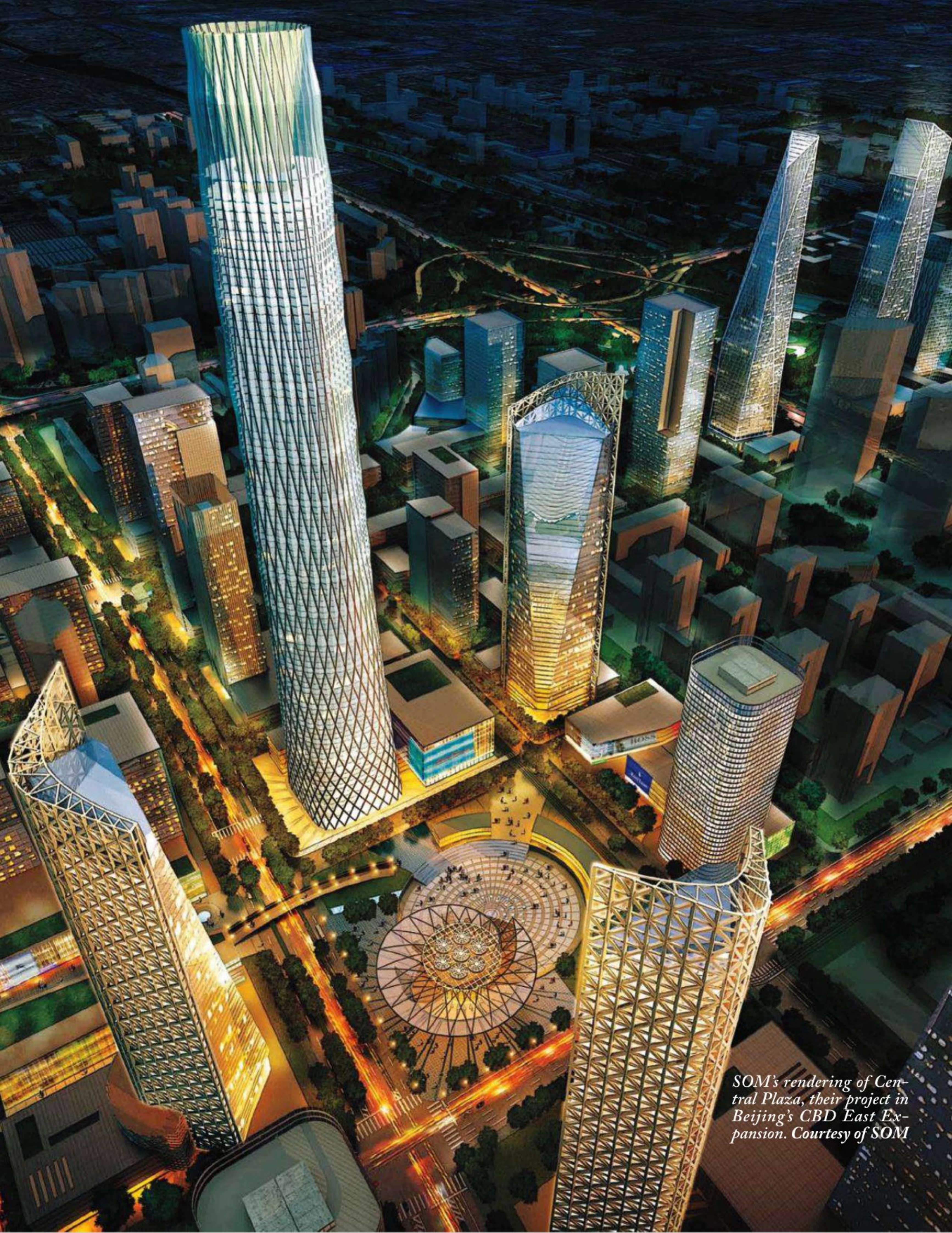
Super-tall skyscraper obsession is spreading in other Chinese cities.

At the end of 2008, ground was broken for the Chongqing International Trade Center, in which 8 billion yuan would be invested. Unless competing plans emerge, the 455-meter-tall tower will be the tallest building in western China when it is completed in 2015.

The historic capital, Beijing, hasn't been quite as enthusiastic towards skyscrapers. To protect its cityscape, Beijing actually imposed restrictions on building height. However, no one can deny that the city is growing rapidly. In October 2007, China World Trade Center Tower III's height of 330 meters became the tallest in town. In October 2010, it opened to the public. "SOM is proud to push Beijing's skyline to a new height," exclaimed Brian Lee, the project architect and design partner, whose firm, SOM, is a global leader in architecture and urban design. However, as is increasingly common in China, the record height will be eclipsed soon. On December 21, 2010, China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) outbid the competition to win a contract for the Z15 plot in Beijing's Central Business District (CBD). The Z15 block is the area's largest plot to welcome public bidding. According to the bidder's plans, a 500-meter-high building will fill up the space within the next a few years.

These cities are not alone in terms of skyscraper construction. The 384-meter-tall Shenzhen Shun Hing Square, 391-meter Guangzhou CITIC Plaza, 336-meter Tianjin World Financial Center, and 450-meter Nanjing Zifeng Tower — in almost all major Chinese cities, modern high-rises are sprouting up.

Li Bai, a renowned man of letters of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), penned verse that can be roughly translated to "the tower is so high that you can pick up a star" over a millennium ago. Today, he seems like more of a prophet than a poet. Towering buildings have filled every corner of major Chinese cities, and his poetic exaggeration became reality.



SOM's rendering of Central Plaza, their project in Beijing's CBD East Expansion. Courtesy of SOM

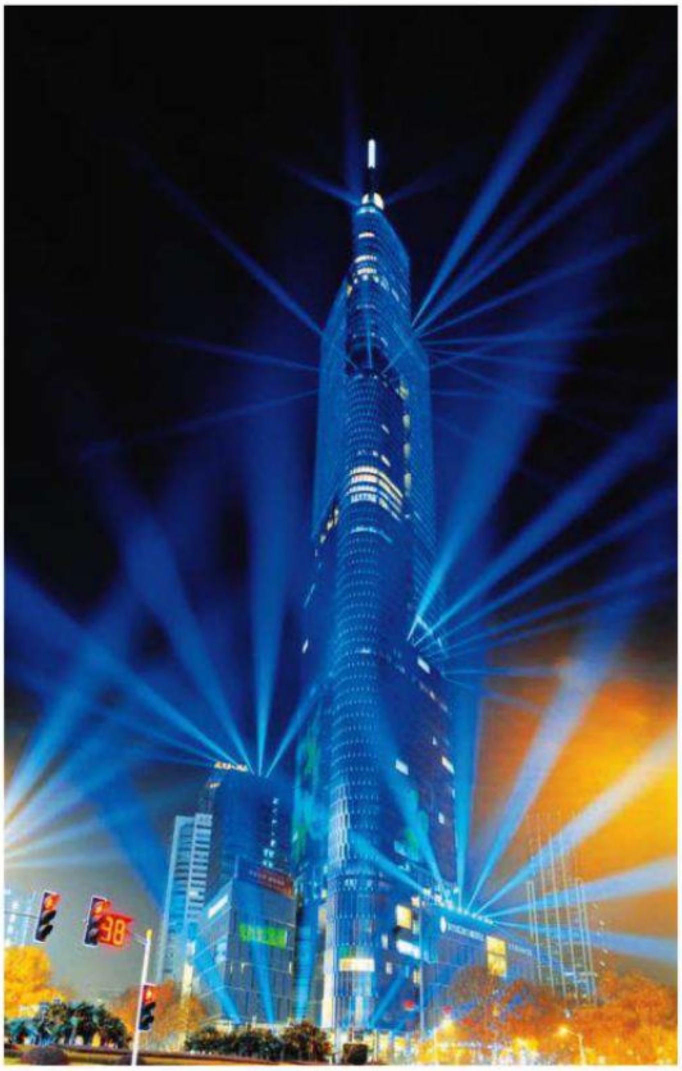
Legends of Skyscrapers

Beginning in the 1870s, skyscrapers began appearing in different places on earth. New technologies made the construction of high-rise buildings possible, which marked a turning point in architecture. At the turn of the 20th Century, high-rises were popping up all over the world. From an architectural technology angle, human progress was making leaps and bounds.

After launching reform and opening-up policies in 1978, China witnessed rapid economic development, which is still bringing a swelling sense of honor to its people. Skyscrapers, and their technology imported from the West, became synonymous with prosperity, and began serving as evidence of economic achievements. More Chinese cities are endeavoring to catch up with developed countries by building skyscrapers – the most obvious and noticeable way. In this aspect, passion for skyscrapers embodies the social mentality of the era.

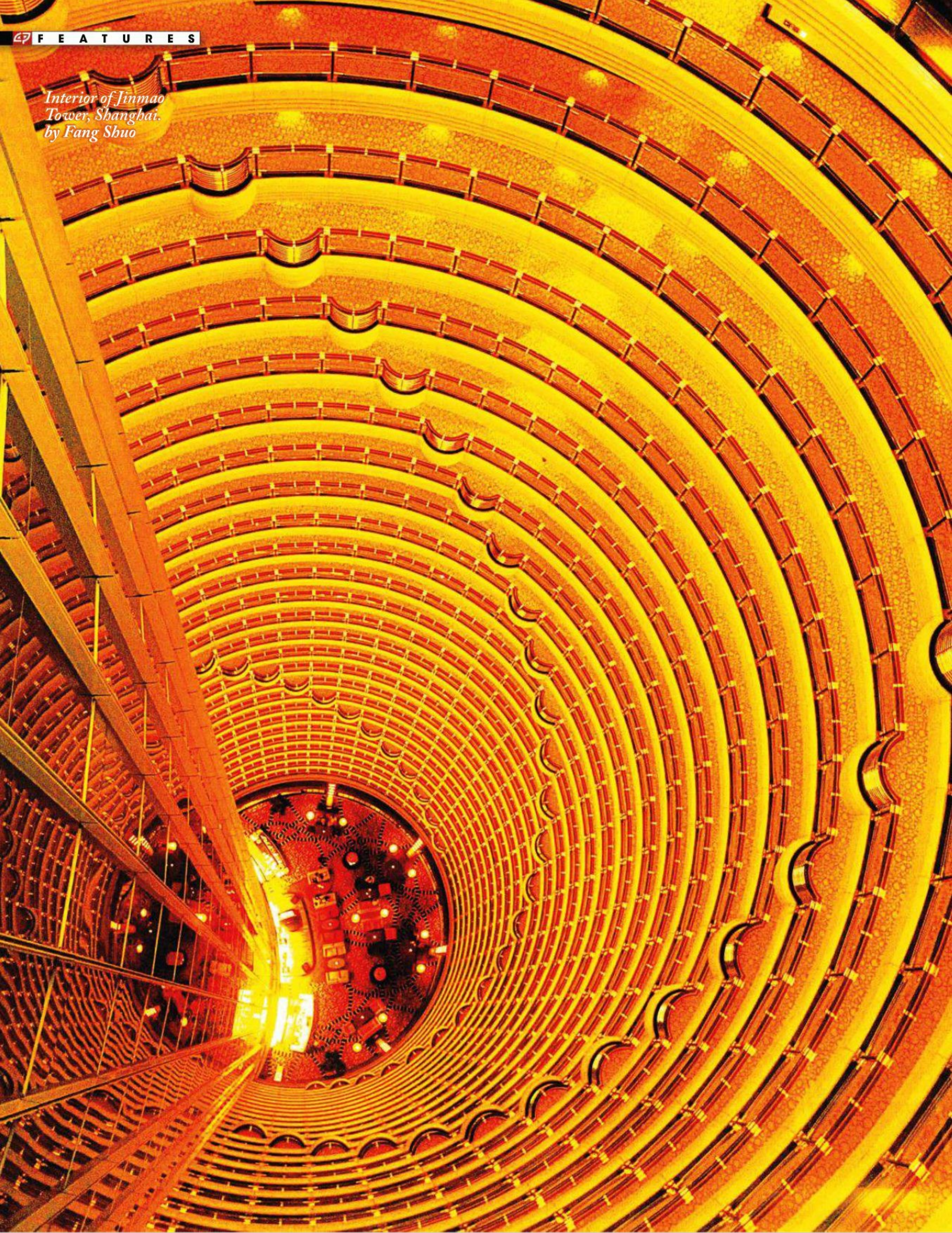
The allure of real estate values and the promise of high rent returns are the primary factors motivating developers to build skyscrapers. Generally speaking, rent and purchase prices for space in a landmark building are 20 to 30 percent higher than in other properties of the same area. Along with developers, municipal authorities

509-meter Taipei 101. by Wang Lei


450-meter Zifeng Tower, now the tallest building in Nanjing. CFP

Overlooking Shanghai. by Hu Guoqin

384-meter Shun Hing Square in Shenzhen. by Wan Quan



Interior of Jinmao Tower, Shanghai. by Fang Shuo are usually happy to see skyscraper plans come to fruition. These giants are the surest ways to flex a city's economic muscles.

Nanfang Daily noted that high-rise buildings have become metaphoric for hope, rejuvenation, and confidence in a society. Wang Jialu of Shanghai Urban Planning & Design Research Institute vividly illustrates this point: Anyone living within Shanghai's middle ring road can see Jinmao Tower and the World Financial Center, including his grandmother who lives in Puxi. The old woman tells him that when she looks out the window towards the towers each day while cooking, her heart swells with a new confidence in life.

"We have no technical bottlenecks in terms of building high-rise towers," remarks Zheng Shiling from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and vice president of the Architectural Society of Shanghai. "And Shanghai is a generous city, which can host both narrow alleys and towering skyscrapers simultaneously. People shouldn't regard skyscrapers as property of the developers. They belong to Shanghai and the country."

China's large population, tight control on land use, growing metropolitan population density and rapid urban development all contribute to the unprecedented demand for skyscrapers. "Did you ever notice the first few cities where high-rise buildings were erected?" queries Chen Yuxin, a designer from the Architectural Department of Southeast University. "They were all crowded, densely populated areas, and served as regional economic centers."

The Pain of Skyscraping

At the end of 2010, a news story involving a Shanghai high-rise building drew great attention both domestically and internationally. On November 15, a fire in a 28-story apartment building on Shanghai's Jiaozhou Road caused 58 deaths. If the building was more easily accessible with ladders and fire hoses, many lives could have been saved.

Contrasting Wuhan's celebrated announcement of its mammoth skyscraper, this news is heart-breaking and distressing.

Safety is a major issue in high-rises. When emergencies occur, damage in skyscrapers is much greater than in smaller structures. Administrators of Jinmao Tower once conducted an experiment by having a group of able-bodied firemen run down 85 floors of stairs. Even the fastest participant took 35 minutes to complete the task.

Safety is just one concern some experts reserve about skyscrapers. Some even criticize them as "outdated fashion." Due to quake-proofing and fire prevention needs, skyscrapers must be framed with steel, which makes the cost much greater than other buildings, not even including maintenance fees. Take the Jinmao Tower as an example: The tallest building on the Chinese mainland from 1997 to 2007 cost 5 billion yuan, and normal operation requires more than 1 million yuan every day. According to figures released by the global design consultancy DEGW, estimating a lifespan of 65 years, maintenance costs should total three to four times the construction cost. Over such a period, Jinmao Tower's maintenance costs will total about 23.7 billion yuan – 4.5 times the original construction cost. In this way, some high-rises fail in their original purpose – to provide economical space.

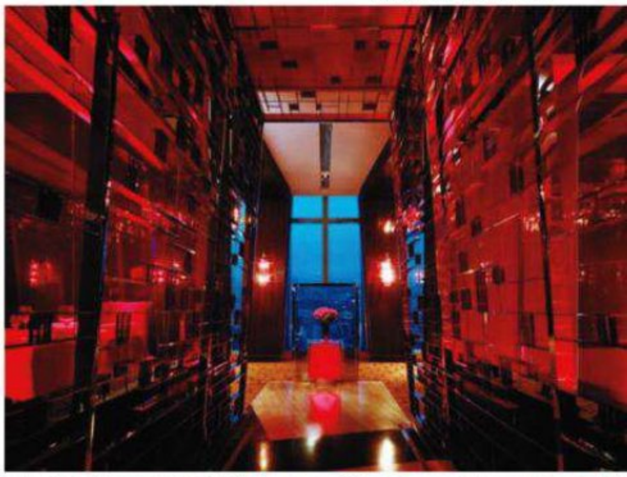
Invisible damage also occurs, such as subsidence (lowering of the earth's surface). According to media reports, subsidence in Shanghai's Pudong area is getting worse. Since the Lujiazui Financial District opened more than 10 years ago, a new building of about 30 stories has been completed every 12 days on average. Now, subsidence in this area has reached three centimeters, with a 6.3-centimeter drop near Jinmao Tower.

Dr. Liu Jiaping from Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology believes that China's high-rise fever needs to be cooled. Otherwise, in just 15 years, problems related to safety, energy consumption, lighting, and sound insulation will become even more glaring. Some experts propose the idea of green construction, which emphasizes that along with increased comforts, new buildings should minimize energy consumption and pollution.

Large projects are always exciting, innovation is the pride of the human brain, and new technology always inspires. However, sometimes people are reluctant to face problems that may go hand-in-hand.

There is no doubt that skyscrapers constructed in the past century are an irreplaceable piece of the human legacy, both spiritually and materially. As landmarks of industrialization and capital power, skyscrapers also carry cultural significance. However, the time has come for people to look at them more comprehensively. "To a great extent, skyscrapers are not just about technology, but more about social networks," claims Yang Baojun, chief designer with the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design. "People shouldn't just look at them solely from the technical point, for not a single high rise stands alone."

China World Trade Center Tower III. Courtesy of Shangri-la Hotel and Resorts



Such massive projects push the limits of human imagination. by Fang Shuo

Top Ten Skyscrapers

The Ten Tallest Buildings in China (including Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan)

1

Taipei 101
509 meters
101 floors

2

Shanghai World Financial Center
492 meters
101 floors

3

Nanjing Greenland Square Zifeng Tower
450 meters
88 floors

4

Shanghai Jinmao Tower
420.5 meters
88 floors

5

Hong Kong IFC 2
415.8 meters
90 floors

in China

In 1908, the tallest building in the world was New York's 200-meter-high Singer Building. In 1932, the Empire State Building nearly doubled this, and its 381 meters made it the world's tallest building for more than 40 years. Not until the completion of the World Trade Center in 1972 was it eclipsed, and in 1974, Chicago's Sears Tower became the world's tallest building at 443 meters. It took 66 years for America's skyscrapers to grow 240 meters.

China's first 200-meter building, the Guangdong International Building, wasn't completed until 1990, becoming the country's tallest building at the time. When the Shanghai World Financial Center opened in 2008, it dwarfed the former, and became China's tallest building at a height of 492 meters. In a span of only 18 years, Chinese buildings realized a height growth of 292 meters.

During those 18 years, more than 50 skyscrapers taller than 250 meters were completed in 17 different cities across the Chinese mainland. By July 2010, the country became home to 46 super high-rise buildings exceeding 300 meters including those in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao. Along with its meteoric development, China's many metropolises have seen their skylines change drastically year after year. Here, *China Pictorial* presents a current list of China's ten tallest skyscrapers. Modern buildings have been pushing the limits of citizen's imaginations, and the advanced construction technology testifies to the country's drastic improvement in building techniques over the years.

This ranking is based on statistics released by the Council of Tall Building and Urban Habitat (CTBUH) on July 1, 2010.

6

Guangzhou CITIC Plaza

391 meters

80 floors

7

Kaohsiung Tuntex Sky Tower

378 meters

85 floors

8

Hong Kong Central Plaza

374 meters

78 floors

9

Bank of China Tower, Hong Kong

367.4 meters

70 floors

10

Shenzhen SEG Plaza

355.8 meters

72 floors

Jin Lu, chief architect of Beijing Urban Engineering Design and Research Institute Co., Ltd. by Fang Shuo

On December 18, 2010, the 325-meter-high building of China Minsheng Banking Corp. Ltd., currently the tallest in Wuhan, formally went into operation, and only 10 days earlier, ground had already been broken for another high-rise in the same central Chinese city. Planned to reach 606 meters into the sky, the new project will become the third tallest building in the world. Such intense construction of high-rises is rare to the rest of the world, but not uncommon in modern China. China's skyscraper count was less than 200 in 1990, but now is nearing 1,000, drastically altering dozens of urban Chinese skylines. Much of the influx of high-rises in China can be attributed to the endeavors of Chinese architects. Recently, *China Pictorial* interviewed Jin Lu, chief architect of Beijing Urban Engineering Design and Research Institute Co., Ltd.

A Higher Purpose

—Interview with Jin Lu, Chief Architect of Beijing Urban Engineering Design & Research Institute

Text by Tan Xingyu

"Under China's Tall Building Fire Code, structures exceeding 100 meters in height are classified as ultra high-rises," explains Jin. "This criterion is similar to standards in other countries." According to the architect, the world's first ultra high-rise was the Home Insurance Building, completed in 1885 in Chicago. "High-rise and ultra high-rise buildings are generally considered icons of urban modernization," he continues, "which help improve cities' appearances through impressive skylines. An aggregation of super-tall skyscrapers conserves urban space, increases commercial efficiency, and attracts investments. In some cities, landmark buildings also serve as important tourism resources."

Due to tremendous costs, super-tall buildings reflect overall national strength to some extent. A review of architectural history of developed countries shows that in the 19th century, they primarily concentrated on constructing urban roads and bridges, and that focus didn't shift to tall buildings until the 20th century. After the turn of the 21st century, they began utilizing underground space to more comprehensively tap urban space resources. China's economic boom and expanding urbanization in recent years have resulted in increasing demand for urban space and consequently increasing numbers of skyscrapers.

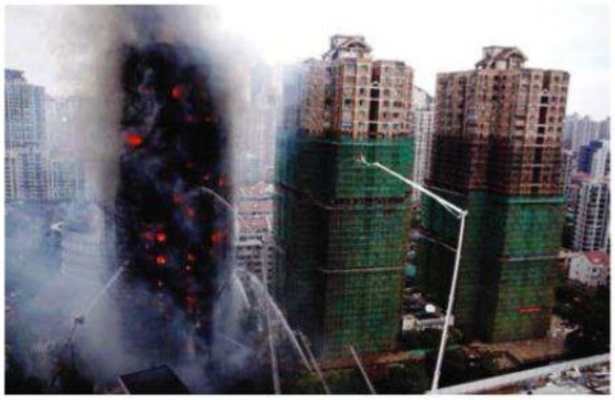
Tall buildings also evidence a nation's architectural technology abilities. "Constructing an ultra high-rise requires tackling a variety of technical issues," Jin reveals. "The first priority should be safety. These days, Chinese technology related to solid foundations and wind and earthquake resistance are relatively mature. Technical solutions for fire safety are also developing quickly. For instance, a state-of-the-art aerial ladder that stretches 101 meters can expand to 160 meters when at full length. And I have heard that China is working on designing equipment to fight fires at heights of up to 500 meters."

However, despite increasing technical solutions, current demands are still not likely to be met. Architectural traits of ultra-tall buildings determine their weaknesses. "Fire fighting and rescue in extremely tall buildings remain tough issues worldwide," Jin asserts. "Because of the many floors, highly-concentrated floor space, and great numbers of residents or employees, fires can cause devastating disasters in skyscrapers. In fact, most fire-related casualties aren't caused by burns, but rather by smoke inhalation. In a 100-meter-tall building, smoke can seep to the top floor via vertical tubes in as little as 30 seconds, which is what we refer to as the 'chimney effect.' Another risk involves glass curtain walls that have become commonplace in skyscrapers. When temperatures rise to a certain level, such walls explode easily and the fire can spread rapidly, making rescue efforts more difficult and dangerous.

"Additionally, many issues remain related to costs and energy consumption in tall buildings as well as their influence on air travel routes. Tall buildings also have an effect on the local eco-environment. For example, they can contribute to the 'urban heat island' effect, block sunlight from their neighbors, and divert high-altitude winds to the ground, which threatens pedestrian safety. From a cultural perspective, a cluster of skyscrapers can damage traditional urban landscapes and result in bunches of identical cities."

The debate continues on how exactly to address such problems. Jin argues that when designing a super high-rise building, the architect should take its every function into account along with the cityscape, space structure, and human living environment in an effort to reach the highest standards of architectural art, complement existing structures in the area, and achieve the best possible technical specifications.

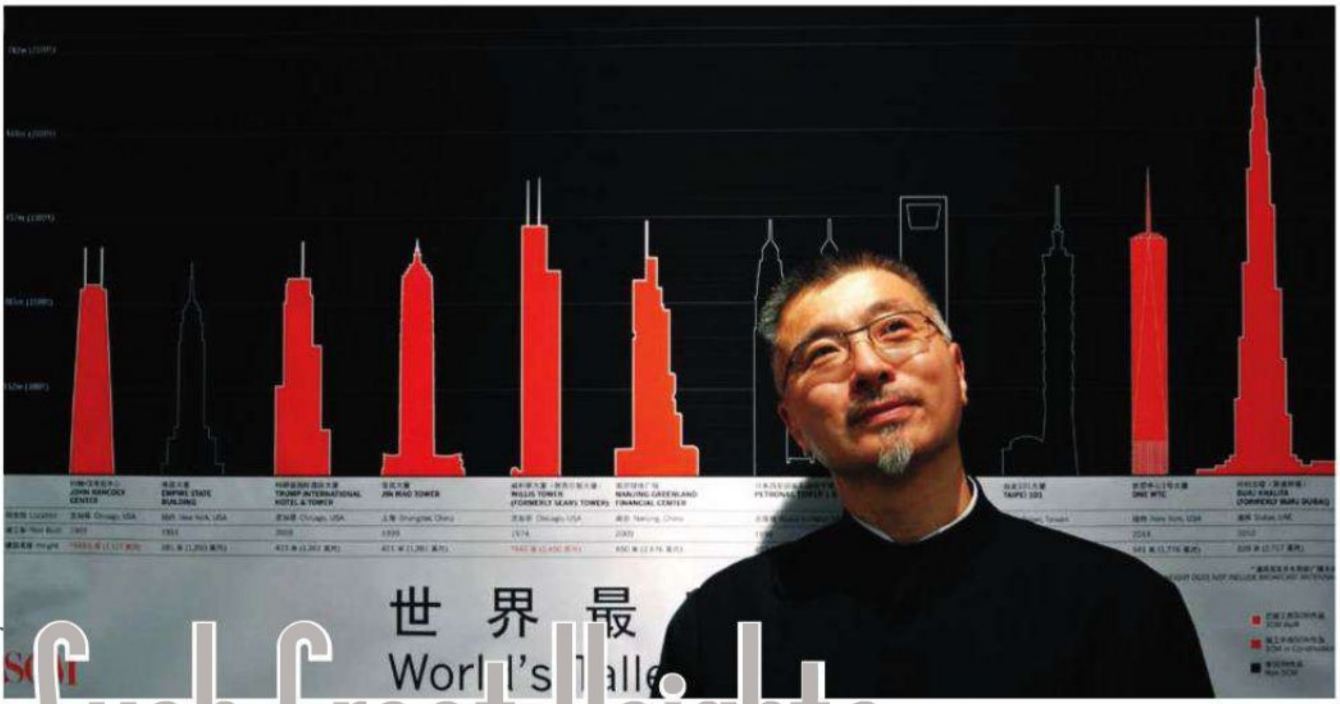
Secondly, Jin thinks that construction firms should follow a series of state requirements and standards concerning tall buildings. He supports existing regulations requiring inspections by fire marshals and strict safety examinations covering a variety of aspects conducted by other authoritative agencies. According to the regulations, construction is allowed to commence only after all design plans are examined and approved. Last year, the Fire Department of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Construction jointly set explicit specifications for thermal insulating materials used in buildings' exterior walls and requirements for fire-blocking layers and water resistance of roof materials.



A fire in a 28-story apartment building in Shanghai last November turned a spotlight to the issue of fighting fires in tall buildings.

And last, but not least, Jin notes that new materials and technology should be adopted to ensure sustainable development. This includes introducing renewable energy devices such as solar panels and wind generators, adopting lighter carbon-based materials, and embracing concepts related to ecological, intelligent building design. "When designing, we should simulate and evaluate the thermal and wind environment to maximize energy conservation," Jin stresses. "In my opinion, tall buildings will ultimately reach a perfect form – taller and sturdier."

Compared to other countries, China still has to play a lot of catch-up in skyscraper construction, Jin continues. "In this field," he says, "Western developed countries have more than a century of experience, whereas we began only 30 years ago. There's still a lot for us to learn." According to him, skyscrapers will continue sprouting in cities across China, and Chinese architects like himself are prepared to accept the mission to continue pushing down the long path that lies ahead.


JOHN HANCOCK CENTER
EMPIRE STATE BUILDING
TRUMP INTERNATIONAL HOTEL & TOWER
JIN MAO TOWER
WILLIS TOWER (FORMERLY SEARS TOWER)
NANJING GREENLAND FINANCIAL CENTER
PETRONAS TOWERS
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Silas Chiow, AIA, Director of SOM China.

Such Great Heights

—Interview with Silas Chiow, Director of SOM China

Founded in 1936, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM) is one of the world's most prolific active architecture, urban design, engineering, and interior design firms. Since entering China's market in the early 1990s, SOM has designed a number of China's most recognizable landmark buildings, including some of the tallest ever constructed. Recently, Silas Chiow, who spearheads the firm's work in China from his Shanghai office, sat down with *China Pictorial (CP)* to share the principles behind the firm's success.

CP: At present, many Chinese cities are constructing tall buildings and skyscrapers. What do you think of the trend in regards to the development of China's building industry and do you support the phenomenon?

Chiow: This has been a trend in China for the last 15 years, and will likely continue for at least the next five to ten years. In many cases tall buildings make sense for developing cities, but not always. They are good solutions to problems related to increasing urban density and rising land prices, and can lead to more compact and efficient city models able to energize surrounding districts and local economies.

But the fact remains that many cities are anxious to build impressive-looking towers to serve primarily as icons of their progress and potential. As a result, some projects are pursued without fully understanding the role of efficiency in building performance, and the structure's relationship to the existing environment. We have seen this trend where a skyscraper looks great on a postcard, but lacks practicality in the long term. In some cases, too much open space inhibits the potential for tenant synergy and a sense of community, while inadequate public transit infrastructure increases reliance on cars.

Regardless, tall building construction is fundamental to China's urban development strategies. The goal is to ensure that development improves the quality of life for China's urban inhabitants over time.

CP: How can the tall building construction process become more environmentally friendly and reduce carbon emissions? What has SOM done in this regard?

Chiow: There are many sustainable concepts we can use to promote environmentally-responsible design and development not only in China but around the world, depending on the goals of the project.

For instance, the first couple buildings that SOM completed in China used mostly foreign systems, whereas today we insist on Chinese products. Part of this process involves working with Chinese clients to select materials that are manufactured nearby, to utilize local companies. This was the case for our work on Tianjin's Jinmen Jinta Tower, where we took advantage of the city's shipbuilding industry to secure steel for the building's frame, rather than using concrete which requires more energy to produce.

These and other practical solutions can contribute to reducing the overall carbon footprint of the building while boosting local economies. So, location is a vital factor in the design process, whether we are looking at the local climate or utilizing natural resources to help guide planning.

One of the most environmentally responsible things the industry can do, however, is to promote healthy long-term development trends. To accomplish this, we must think globally and design locally — meaning we need to let unique qualities of each locale determine our response to each project. This allows us to appreciate the respective challenges that each project brings to the table.

CP: Some argue that skyscrapers destroy a city's skyline. How do you think buildings can become a more natural part of a city?

Chiow: As China's skylines continue to evolve with their own character and flavor, SOM recognizes the value of buildings that are "designed by Chinese, for the Chinese." It is important to make a distinction, though, between towers that are built as symbolic evidence of China's remarkable growth, and those that actually enhance the value of the cities they serve.

Around the world, SOM believes that smart buildings and master plans define great cities. This is why many of the firm's buildings continue to perform for second and third generations of users, because they are able to adapt to changing technologies, markets, urban and user environments. This is true for many of the firm's buildings that today are already protected as architectural heritage.

Ultimately, long-range planning and design must prevail, or unchecked development can overwhelm historical inheritance in the world's great cities. In China, these issues are especially weighted because decisions are permanent and alter long-held traditions.

So, when it comes to protecting or eliminating features of the project site during early stages of development, it is important to look at things holistically. By doing so we can better balance the desire for progress with methodical consideration of the consequences each decision might bring.

CP: Which tall buildings did SOM design in China? What do you think are the reasons for the company's success here?

Chiow: Tall building design continues to be an important part of SOM's work in China, along with the firm's efforts in master planning and urban design of China's expanding cities, such as the Beijing CBD East Expansion last year. In fact, the firm has designed eight of the current tallest buildings in as many Chinese cities, namely Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Wenzhou, Zhengzhou, Nanchang, Cixi and Nanjing.

As an international practice, SOM is highly selective of projects, choosing those that will deliver improved cities, buildings, and industry standards. Our success in China is built on the firm's long history of design excellence in the US and around the world. Fortunately, China is recognizing that tall building development is not measured only by height or form, but by a broader range of issues.

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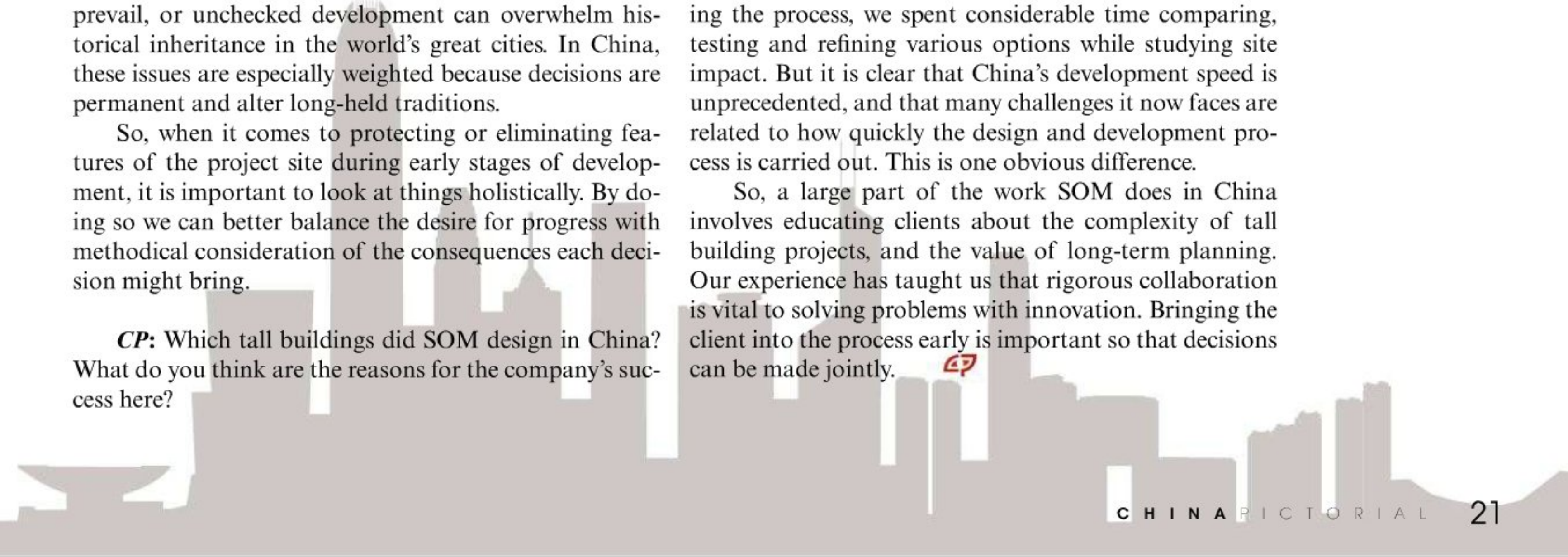
In a larger sense, SOM is motivated by the idea that we are judged by the legacy we leave. So, our work in China is about delivering a clear vision for China's new and developing urban areas. We believe that great cities thrive because they balance enhanced quality of life with greater social and environmental responsibility. Architecture naturally plays a pivotal role in this process.

Fortunately China's industry practices continue to mature as they embrace more intelligent and sustainable models of development. Decision-makers are looking beyond tall buildings in terms of form and space to consider a project's total environment.

CP: In your opinion, what are the differences between designing a skyscraper in China and in any other country in the world? What measures have you taken to meet Chinese clients' demands during the process?

Chiow: From my own experience in New York in the late 1980s and 1990s, we had the chance to work on designs for many years before they were fully realized. During the process, we spent considerable time comparing, testing and refining various options while studying site impact. But it is clear that China's development speed is unprecedented, and that many challenges it now faces are related to how quickly the design and development process is carried out. This is one obvious difference.

So, a large part of the work SOM does in China involves educating clients about the complexity of tall building projects, and the value of long-term planning. Our experience has taught us that rigorous collaboration is vital to solving problems with innovation. Bringing the client into the process early is important so that decisions can be made jointly.



Beauty Sky Dreams

Every person and entity possesses equal opportunity to create and invent, however, not all entrepreneurs ever take the chance to build their own brands.

When building a brand, one should first free himself from constraints of prejudice and traditional thinking, with eyes wide open for the possibility of discovery, creation and invention. Innovation is built from dreams, science and adventure.

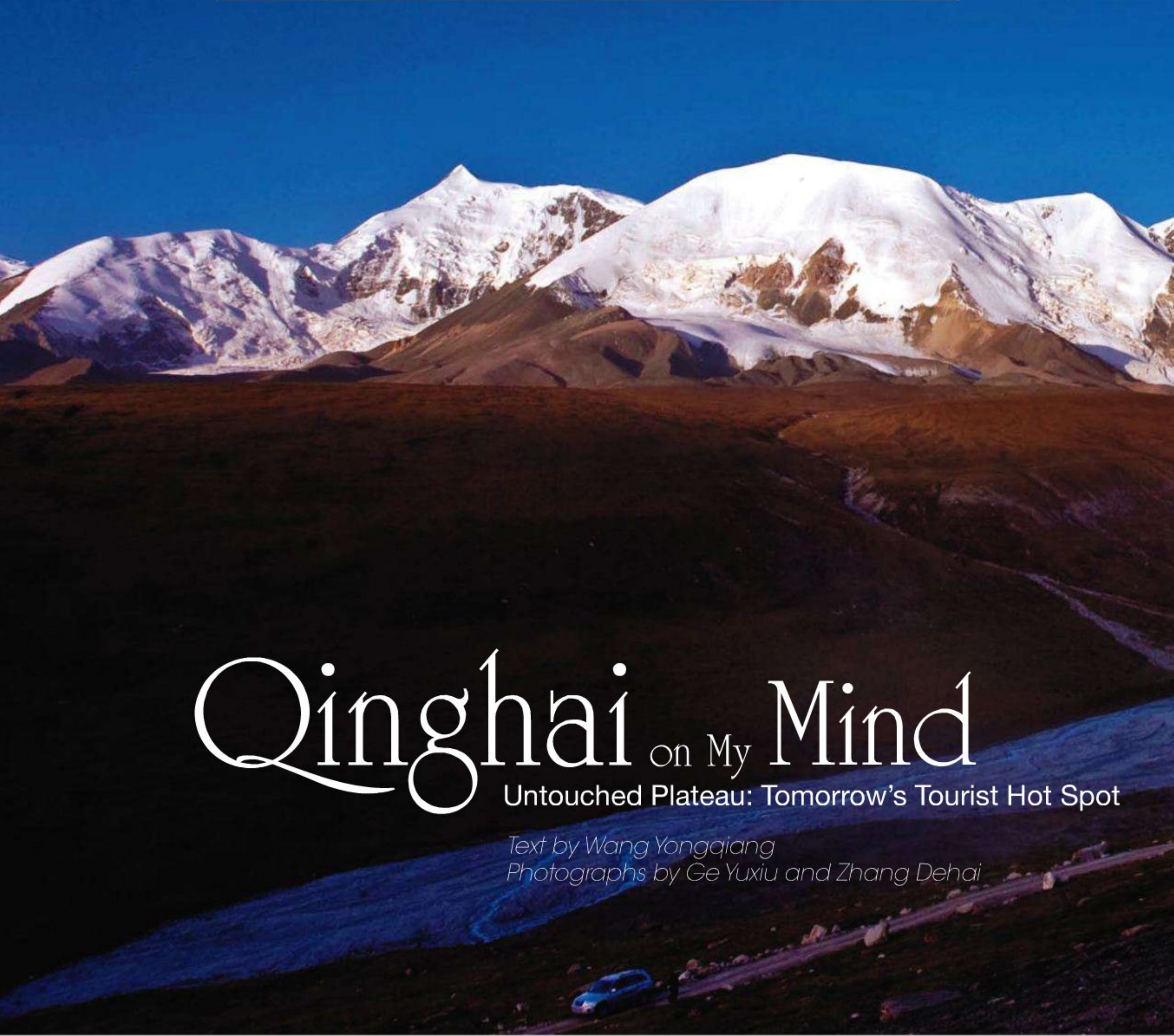
Beauty Sky endured the journey yesterday, building a brand with wisdom.

Beauty Sky strives towards higher goals tomorrow.

We are looking forward to the future.

貴喜
《中国茶叶》
彩云红
BEAUTY SKY
红岁
天一红顶

On the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, at about 4,000 meters above sea level, Kunlun Mountain is covered by snow year-round.



Qinghai on My Mind

Untouched Plateau: Tomorrow's Tourist Hot Spot

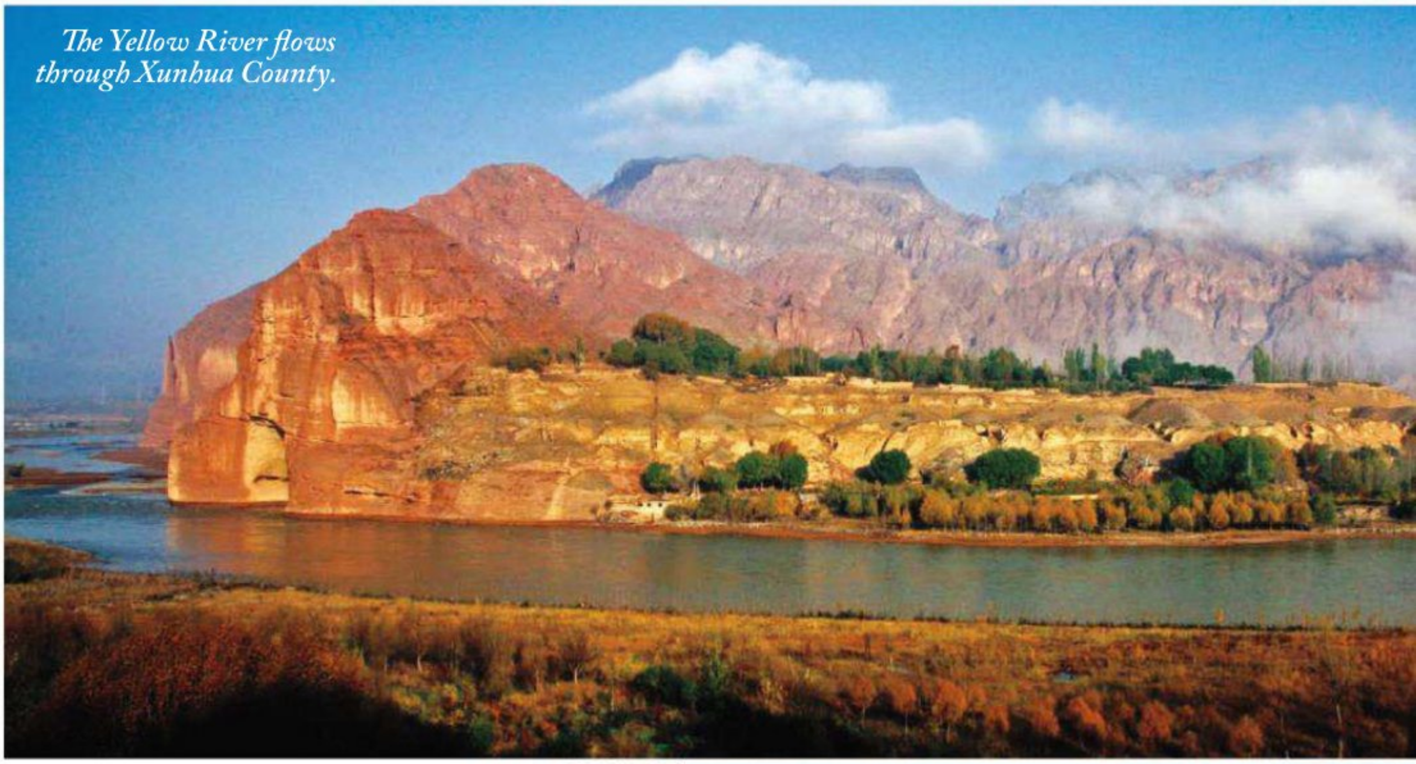
Text by Wang Yongqiang
Photographs by Ge Yuxiu and Zhang Dehai

Despite China's growing tourism boom, Qinghai Province has remained relatively untouched, retaining vagueness in the minds of most Chinese people, not to mention international tourists. Still, the devastating earthquake that rocked the province's Yushu Prefecture on April 14, 2010, caused unprecedented global attention to turn to the oft-forgotten side of the plateau.

Qinghai is substantially removed from the bulk of China's more popular tourist destinations such as the Great Wall and Yangtze River. For several years, distant Beijing has enjoyed the biggest flow of inbound tourists, followed by Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province.

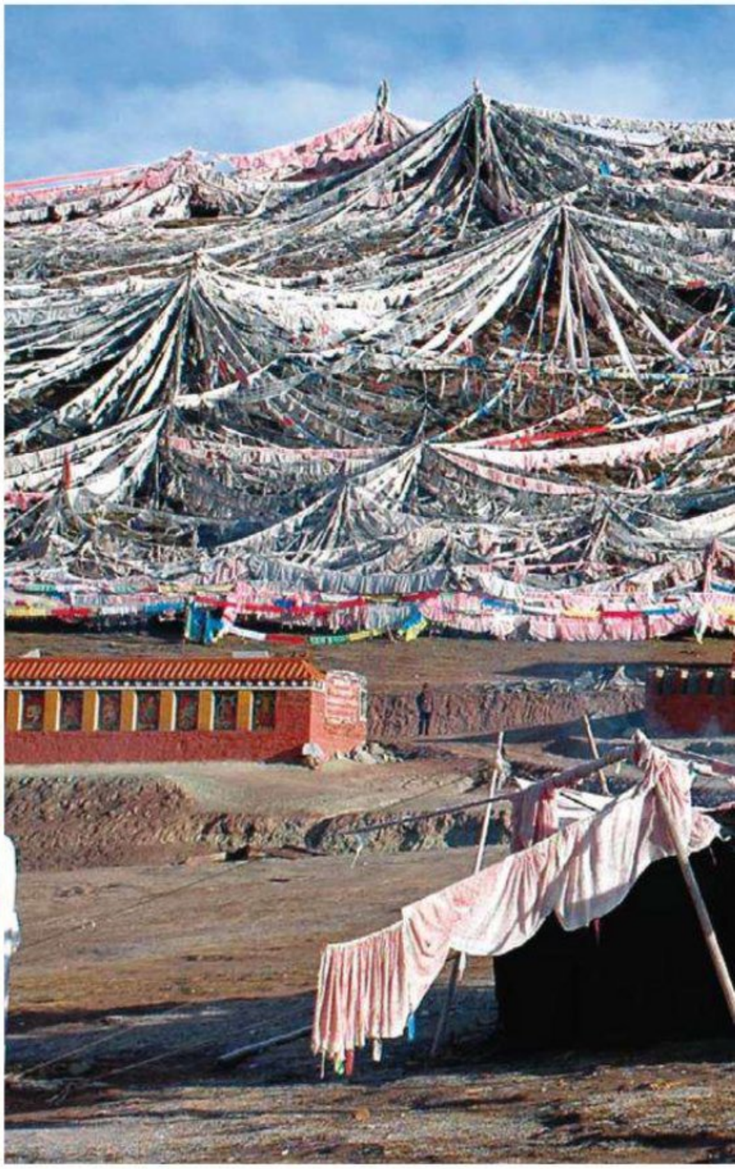
China's eastern seaboard, especially massive clusters of civilization blooming around the Yellow River, Yangtze, and Pearl River deltas, is more accessible to the outside world, so understandably has developed more mature

Breathtaking Animaqing Snow Mountain.

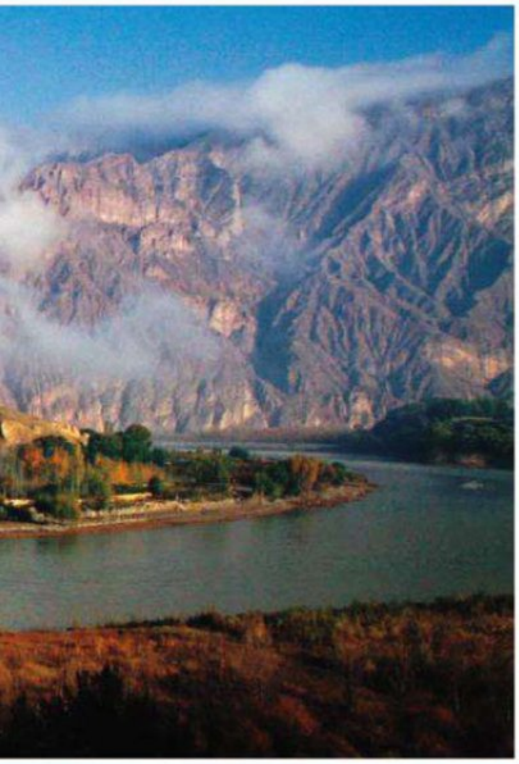


The Yellow River flows through Xunhua County.

The largest Mani stone mound in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.



Jinyintan Grassland earned fame not for its lush landscape, but rather due to a popular song by folk musician Wang Luobin.



tourist markets. In recent years, along with the central government's efforts to develop and ignite the economy of the western regions, the transportation, infrastructure, and tourist facilities in area cities have been constantly improving, building tourism potential capable of rivaling the deltas.

Still, as both Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous regions were earning greater worldwide fame, Qinghai Province, their neighbor, remained an oft-forgotten 721,000 square kilometers. Representing the northeastern part of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, it lagged behind in terms of tourism development, with annual visitor totals even fewer than some single "water town" destinations in the south. The province does have a couple factors working in its favor: It is the starting point of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway (the world's first trans-plateau line), and its Qinghai Lake is the only saltwater lake in inland China.

Home to only 5.7 million people, Qinghai has a population lower than any other province or autonomous region except Tibet. Historically, the harsh, high-altitude plateau environment and inconvenient transportation hindered the development of the area, which was char-

Hanging sutra streamers is an important rite when the Buddhists worship. In this picture, colorful streamers bring a sacred aura to a heavily Tibetan area of Qinghai.

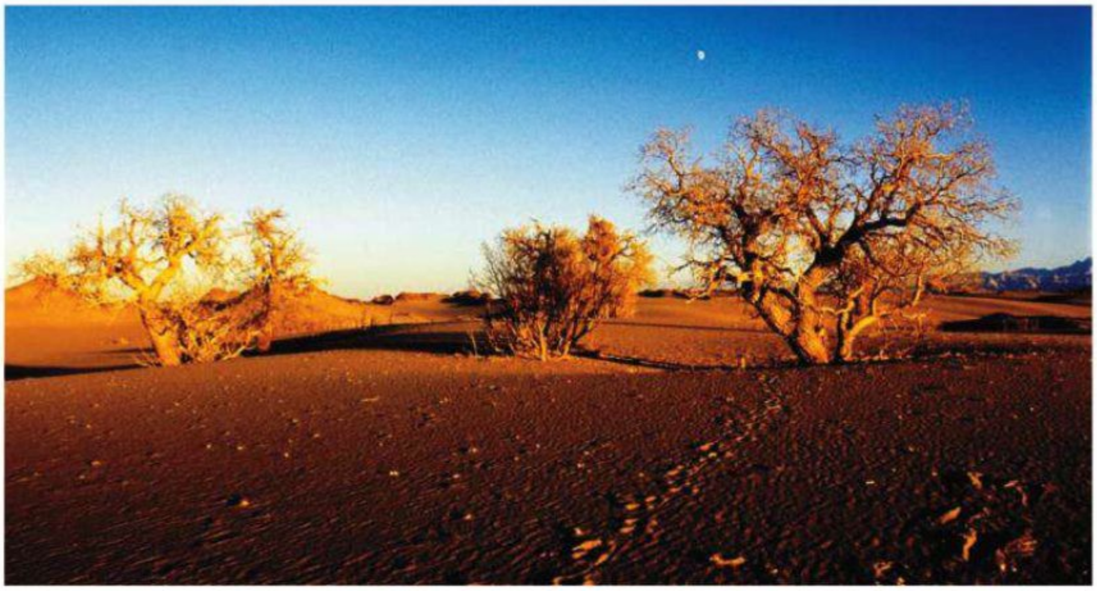
acterized as desolate and out-of-the-way by poets of various dynasties. Even today, not every official at provincial and ministerial levels has a clear, thorough picture of Qinghai. When Qiang Wei first stepped on Qinghai soil to assume the post of the provincial Party secretary, he was astonished by the spectacular vistas. As he traveled further across the province, he was moved by the scenery and asserted that one may only identify "great beauty" after visiting Qinghai. His impressive speech titled "Qinghai in My Eyes," delivered at Qinghai University, became an internet sensation for a time.

Some well-traveled globetrotters highly recommend Qinghai to those who enjoy the magnificence of nature. There, one can soak up stunning mountains and lakes, trudge across spectacular deserts, relax in serene wetlands and forest meadows, and savor the folk customs of a variety of ethnic groups including Han, Tibetan, Hui, Tu, Salar, and Mongolian. From the summit of Riyue (Sun and Moon) Mountain, 4,000 meters above sea level, visitors are often overwhelmed by the unparalleled feeling brought on by landscapes of such majesty and grandeur. The feeling tends to linger in the minds of the province's guests even long after their departure.

Many of the world's mountains would be dwarfed in the face of the awe-inspiring Kunlun and Tanggula, both towering like holy shrines draped with snow year-round. Vast Qinghai Lake, considered China's most beautiful by some, glimmers like a giant emerald embedded in the plateau. The three great rivers that have nurtured Chinese civilization for ages – Changjiang (Yangtze), Huanghe (Yellow), and Lancang – all originate in Qinghai.

According to Party Secretary Qiang, Qinghai's beau-

Multi-horned antelope, a species unique to Qinghai.

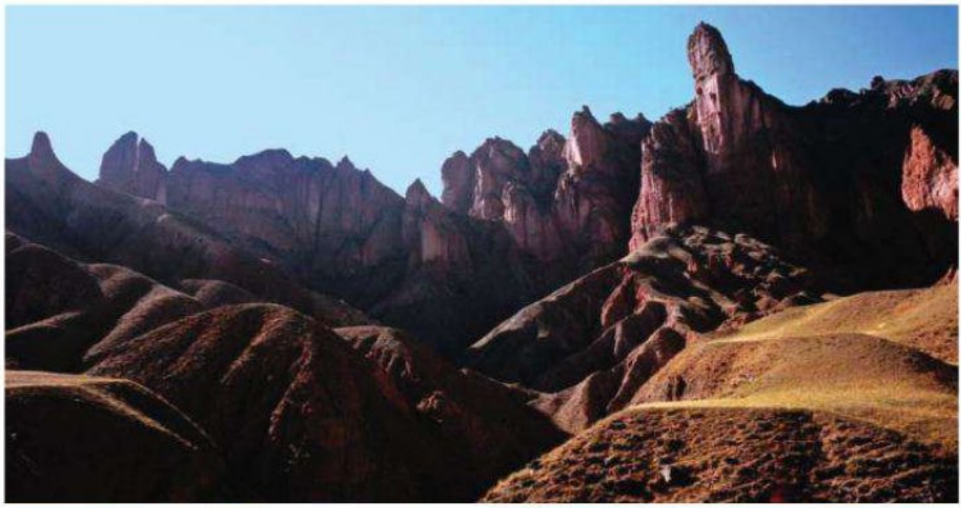


Resistant to cold and drought, box trees are able to live up to 1,000 years.

ty stems from the plateau's ecological diversity and irreplaceable charm. It features not only beautiful landscapes like those in other western regions such as Xinjiang, Sichuan, and Ningxia, but also uniquely breathtaking scenes rarely seen elsewhere. According to some tourism writers, Qinghai is a marvelous destination where stunning vistas can be found along with every step.

The 21st century has brought increased focus on environmental protection, resulting in an evolution of concepts related to traveling. As opposed to tourist sites with more man-made elements and less historical and cultural significance, these days, natural untouched landscapes are attracting more visitors, and riding the wave of such a trend, Qinghai is sure to become one of China's next tourist hot spots.

A colorful wetland.



A spectacular stone forest on the upper reaches of the Yellow River is the result of tectonic movement.

Qinghai Lake is considered holy by Tibetans. The lake's Bird Islet is so named because tens of thousands of migratory birds rest there each year.

Just Like the Real Thing

Ceramic Replicas in Jingdezhen

Text by Tan Xingyu
Photographs by Li Hao

An elegant vase featuring flower patterns and bird images in blue and white sold for US$10.2 million on December 1, 2010. The porcelain piece is dated from the reign of Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), and its creators could have never imagined that centuries later their work would attract such bidding at Christie's in Hong Kong. The sale turned a global focus towards those who collect antique Chinese porcelain.

Skill and patience are crucial to porcelain replication.

Such markets are common in Jingdezhen.

Naturally, genuine antique ceramics are quite hard to find, which is why they are so attractive to collectors, but their rarity gives rise to a new industry – imitating ancient porcelain.

"Replica porcelain and the genuine article are like apples and oranges," illustrates Yang Jingrong, an ancient porcelain specialist and researcher at the Palace Museum in Beijing. According to Yang, replicating ancient ceramics is an important part of Chinese arts and crafts. Doing so helps craftsmen develop techniques and contributes to advances in modern ceramic-making. Yang continues, "Some ancient techniques are so well-replicated today, that they could mislead collectors if not evaluated by experts."

Working with care.

The city of Jingdezhen in central China's Jiangxi Province is known for its ceramic production. A village near its railway station, Fanjiajing, serves as a distribution center for quality ceramic replicas. Despite a small population of 3,000, Fanjiajing is home to more than 500 porcelain mills and stores. Some mills are run by local farmers and others by outsiders.

Each mill produces one certain type of ceramics from a certain period, like blue-and-white from the Yuan and Ming Dynasties (1271-1644), color enamels of the Qing, and famille rose of the Republic of China era (1912-1949). A craftsman can only gain employment at such a mill after demonstrating exceptional skill.

Production is highly efficient because work is clearly divided into different styles, including padding, underglaze coloring for blue-and-white, and overglaze coloring for famille rose.

Also, dozens of mills specialize in "antique finishing" – an essential final procedure in antique replication. These mills are operated by craftsmen with even more notable skill.

Along with the mills, some freelance painters and designers command higher pay. It's not uncommon for an owner to shut down his mill and work at home once his products perform well on the market. With a good reputation, he doesn't need to promote his work – he can wait for customers to come to his doorstep. Other motivating factors in closing a public shop are concerns that techniques will be stolen or prices undercut by competitors.

Fanjiajing Village primarily produces medium-grade wares, whereas high-grade replicas can be found elsewhere in Jingdezhen. Many of the most skilled artisans started their business in Fanjiajing before success motivated their move home, where they work together with specialists in kilning, firing, and painting.

In the 1990s, most mills in Jingdezhen used gas for kilning not only because it saves space and money, but also because it's clean and easy to operate. However, only those able to invest extra use firewood, which results in highest-quality products.

Even the best replicas vary in grade and price, with the most expensive prices pushed up by limited quantity and avoidance of high-tech methods by traditional-minded masters. Today in Jingdezhen, there are fewer than 20 such masters, and some have left to work in Thailand and Japan. Some masters sign big contracts to work solely with a particular company.

Generally speaking, the best mills produce only about a dozen replicas a year, and destroy anything that fails to meet their lofty standards. Some products may even be auctioned as genuine, wreaking havoc on the market, to the chagrin of collectors and experts.

"It's the same old story," sighs an elder from auction circles. "There is nothing we can do. Replicating techniques are beyond belief. Some replicas are so similar to originals that even experts can hardly tell them apart. However, this might also explain why so many people enjoy the hunt."

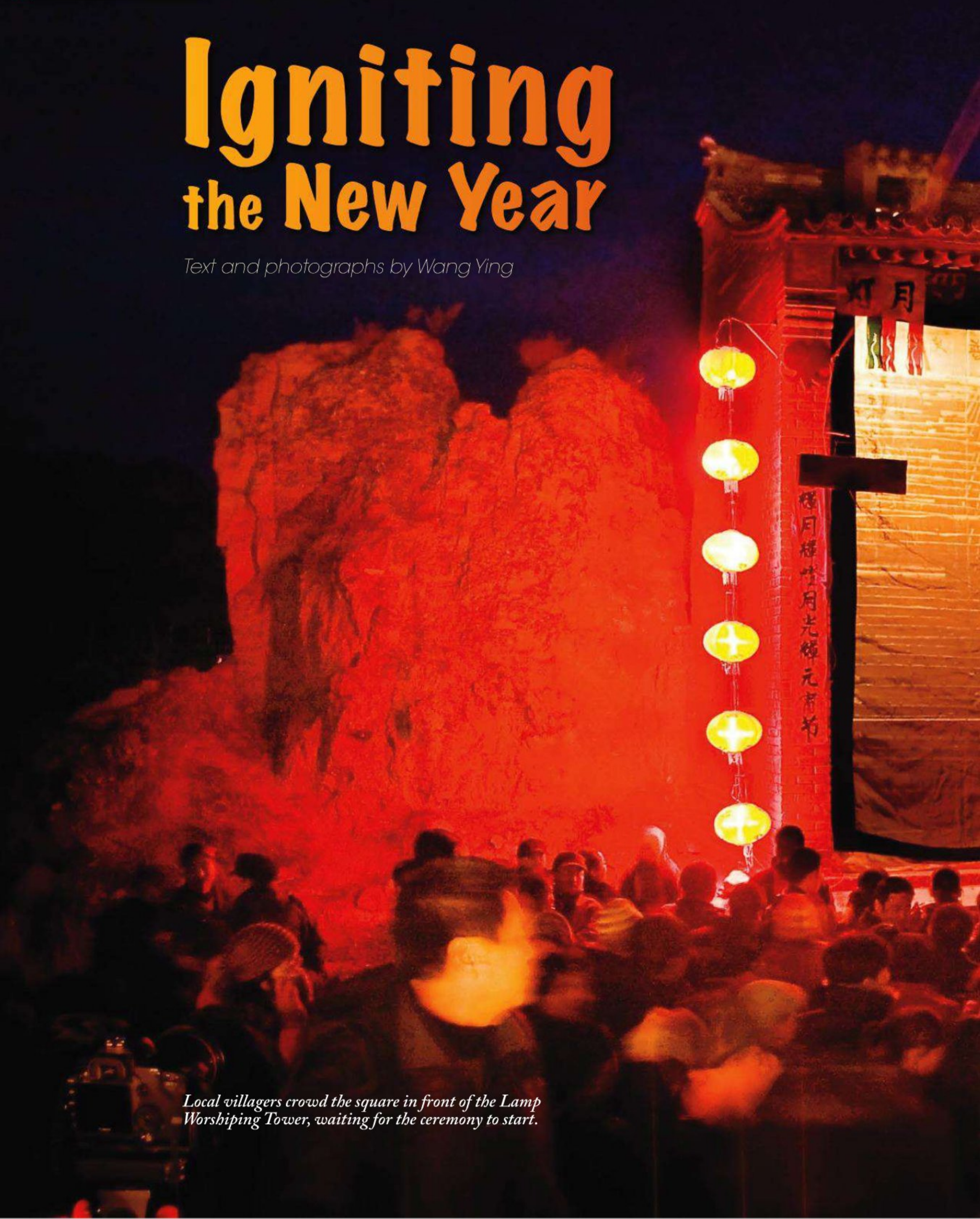
Antique finishing, a key step of replication.

Looking after her "antiques."

Abandoned replicas.

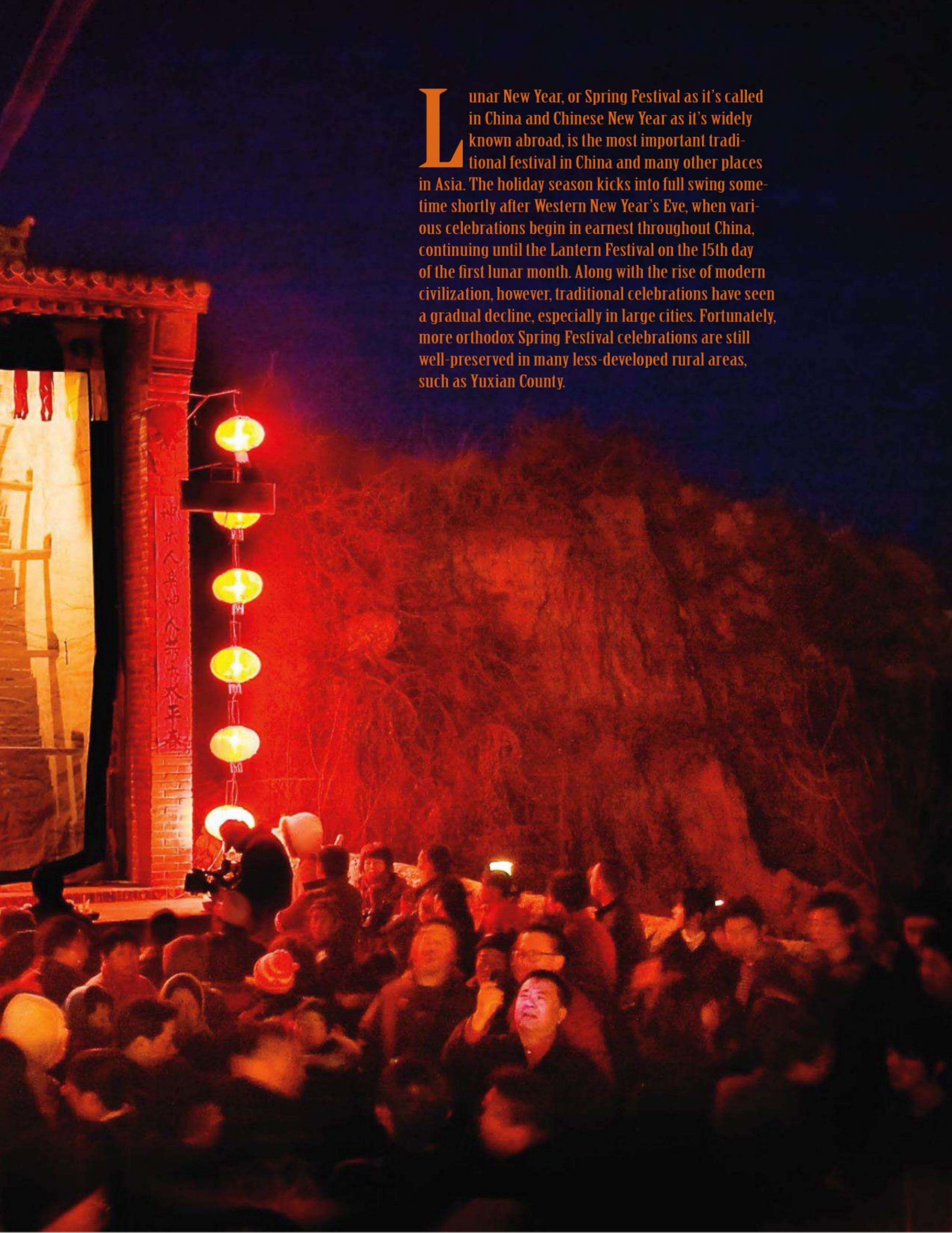
Igniting the New Year

Text and photographs by Wang Ying

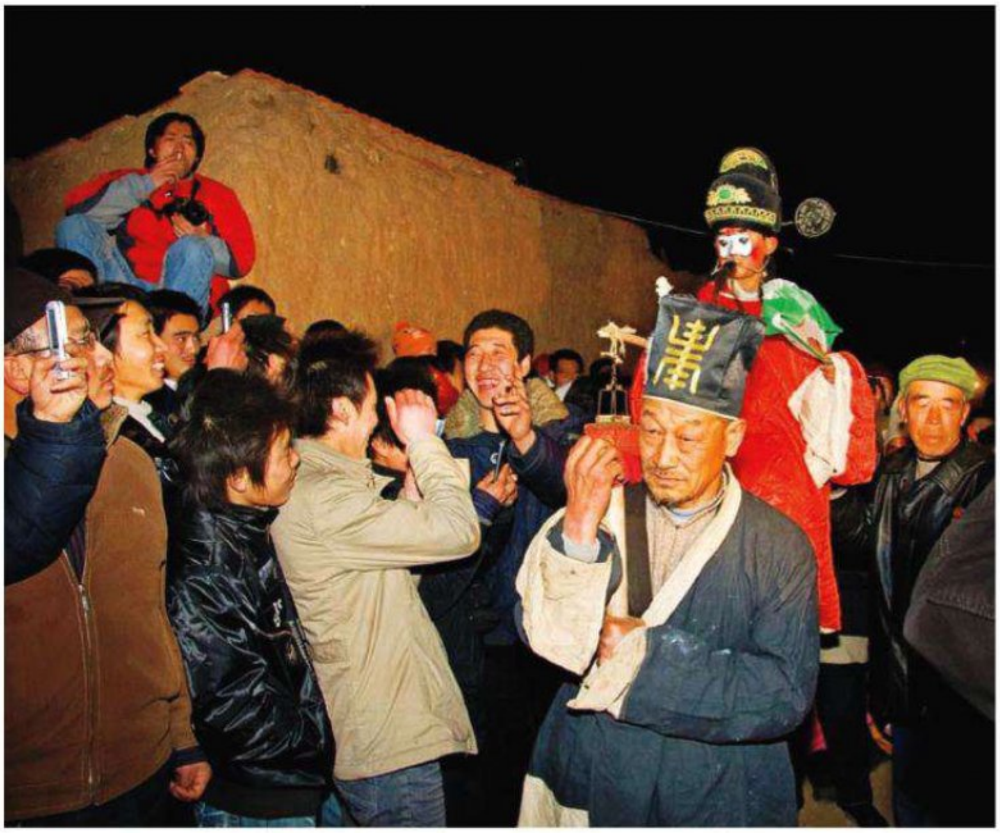


Local villagers crowd the square in front of the Lamp Worshiping Tower, waiting for the ceremony to start.

Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival as it's called in China and Chinese New Year as it's widely known abroad, is the most important traditional festival in China and many other places in Asia. The holiday season kicks into full swing sometime shortly after Western New Year's Eve, when various celebrations begin in earnest throughout China, continuing until the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first lunar month. Along with the rise of modern civilization, however, traditional celebrations have seen a gradual decline, especially in large cities. Fortunately, more orthodox Spring Festival celebrations are still well-preserved in many less-developed rural areas, such as Yuxian County.



Oil lamps glow as firecrackers explode.



Tourists snap pictures of parading villagers carrying the "lantern officer."

Nestled in the Huliu River Valley of Hebei Province, Yuxian lies only about 240 kilometers from Beijing along an important passage between North China Plain and Zhangbei Plateau. Historically, due to its strategic location, the county was the site of countless battles between nomadic tribes from the North and feudal regimes in Central China. Since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), several fortresses erected there served their builders' defense needs. One of them, Shangsuzhuang Village, is amongst the county's best-preserved.

Shangsuzhuang's history can be traced back to the reign of Emperor Jiajing (1522-1566) of the Ming Dynasty. During its early years and after its retirement from military use, the village not only played host to legions of residents, but also cultivated its own folk customs, such as the Lamp Worshipping ceremony to pray for blessings from the god of fire during the Spring Festival. The traditional ceremony has already been handed down through the generations for more than 460 years. In the past, similar celebrations happened all over Yuxian County, but only Shangsuzhuang now continues the tradition. In 2008, the ceremony was included in China's Second National Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

When the village first emerged as a Ming Dynasty fortress, a memorial tower, known now as the Lamp Worshipping Tower, was built in the southern end to worship the god of fire. Offsetting it, the Temple of Three Brothers was built in the northern section in honor of Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei, who swore brotherhood at the Peach Garden in the classic novel *The Romance of Three Kingdoms*. Legend goes that Liu Bei was reincarnated as the god of water, so the temple helps keep balance with the "fire" of the southern end.

I visited Shangsuzhuang during last year's Lantern Festival to witness the time-honored ceremony. When I arrived in the afternoon, I quickly scaled a tall platform in the Temple of Three Brothers that offered an aerial view of the village. A main street bisected the village into east and west halves while roofs of the quadrangle residences glistened in the rays of the afternoon sun, adding the illusion of warmth to the otherwise chilly winter. Outside every household gate hung a colored lantern, and lanes were decorated with a rainbow of paper banners.

When darkness fell, the red lanterns under the eaves of the Temple of Three Brothers began glowing against the backdrop of nearby pristine mountains while yellowish light seeped out windows of residences, creating a tranquil ambience.

After dinner, the villagers poured out into the streets and paraded towards the Lamp Worshipping Tower, a simple nine-meter-tall structure. Through translucent gauze curtains covering the tower, I could make out a huge wooden shelf shouldering hundreds of oil lamps. Before the ceremony, village elders arranged the oil lamps to create several Chinese characters to pray for blessings. Two clusters of red lanterns flanking the tower lit up the front square, which was filled with people anxiously waiting for the ceremony's commencement.

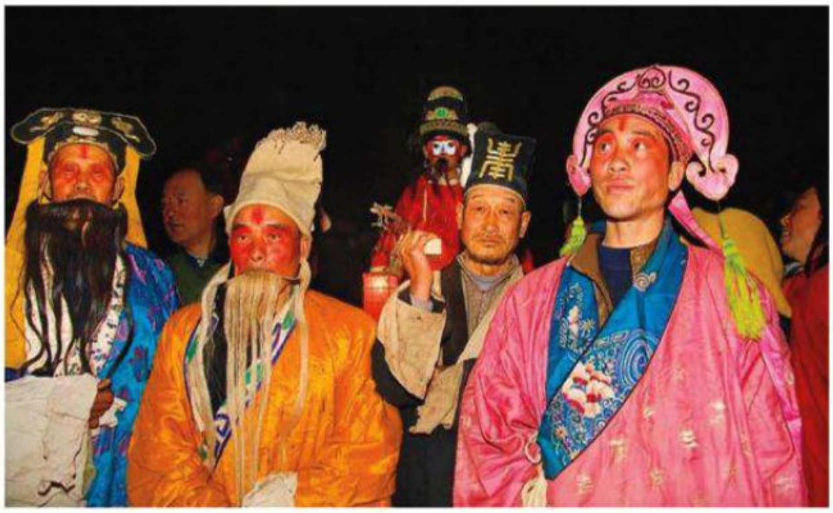
Each year, the oil lamps make up a variety of different prayers, but they always express hope for goodwill in the coming year. Some pray for a good harvest, some for peaceful life, and others for favorable weather. Only the elders tasked with lighting know which prayers will be chosen each year, and attempting to guess the characters as the oil lamps are slowly ignited one by one adds an unexpected excitement to the event.

And so the ceremony started. Several villagers mounted the shelf with candles to light the oil while the rest waited in the square for the prayer to be revealed. As each lamp began glowing, whispers rumbled through the crowd offering guesses as to the phrase. The mystery ended with light in every lamp, and then a scroll carrying a pair of hopeful couplets dropped with the bang of firecrackers.

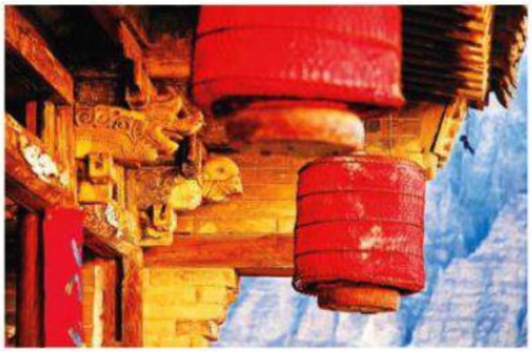
Accompanied by drumbeats and gongs, a parade of folk opera performers in traditional costumes approached. With them, two villagers carried a sedan chair seating a boy dressed as a traditional county magistrate. The lucky youngster was selected by the villagers to be appointed "lantern officer" of the ceremony. When the honorary official announced the start, the paraders began burning incense and kowtowing to the god of fire, praying for a peaceful and prosperous year.

Then, locals began worshipping the god of fire individually. Some parents raised their children to reach lanterns hanging from roadside poles, wishing to accelerate the children's growth. As lamps on the wooden shelf gradually dimmed, the crowd in the square slowly dissipated with new warmth of hope for the coming year.

When the ceremony concluded, villagers began parading towards the theatrical stage in the east of town. Normally, folk operas are staged there for the event, but last year was different. Instead, youngsters performed modern songs and dances to the delight of the crowds. Snack peddlers hawked their treats to the audience while the joyful laughter of children pumped life into the stale winter air, ushering out the stillness of winter with boisterous pageantry.

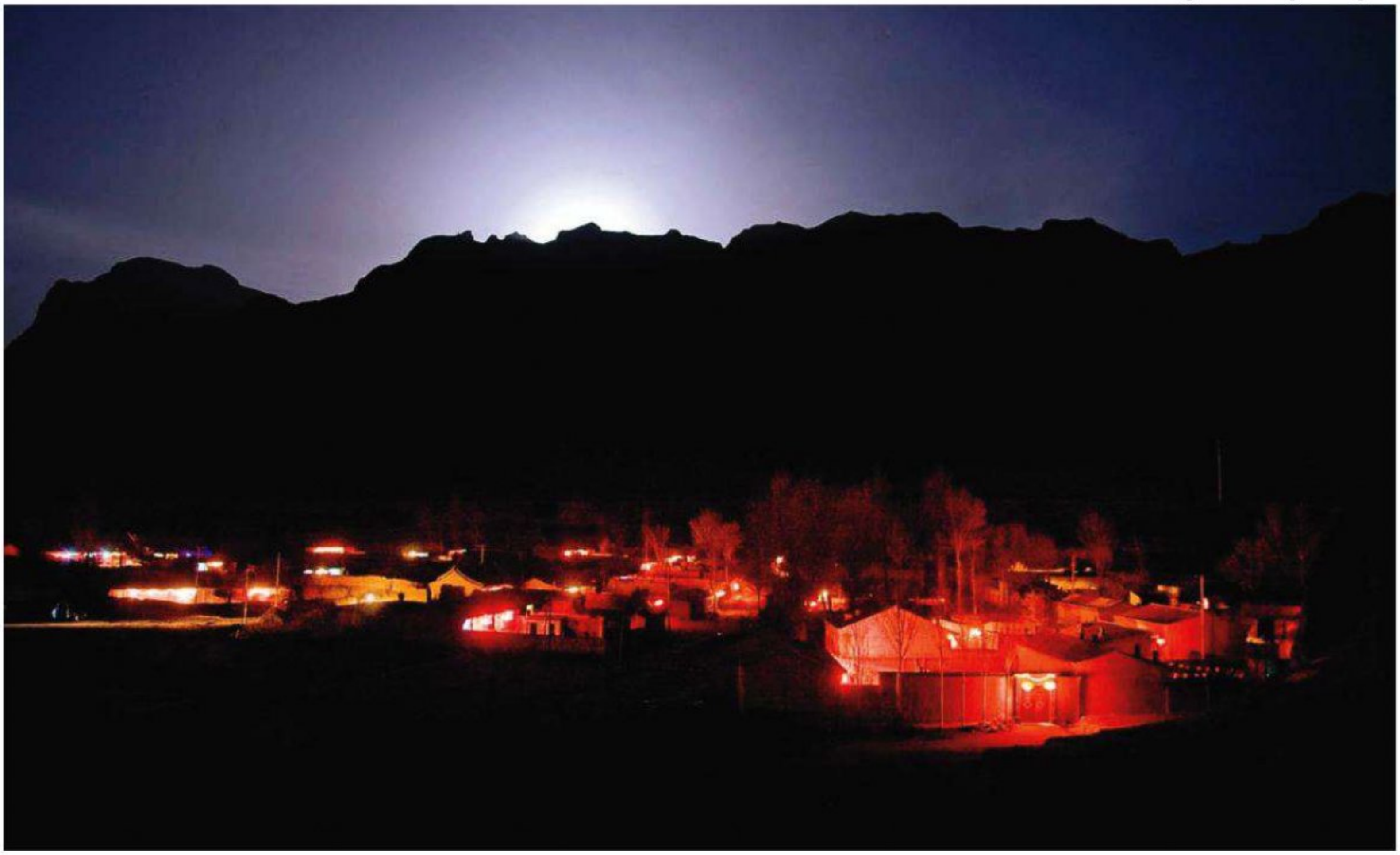


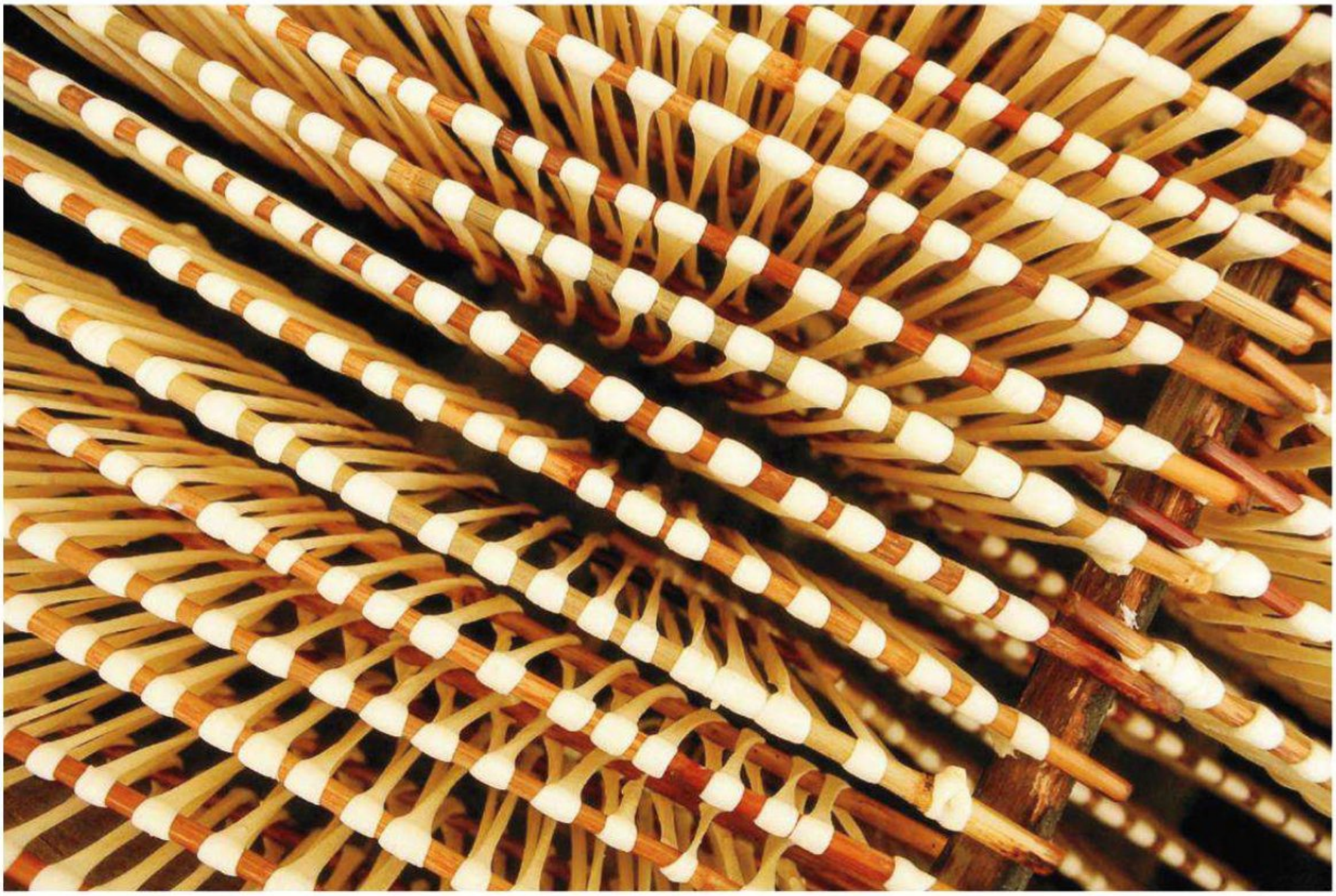
Opera performers in traditional costumes at the Lamp Worshiping ceremony.



Red lanterns hang under exquisite eaves of the Temple of Three Brothers.

Shangsuzhuang at night.



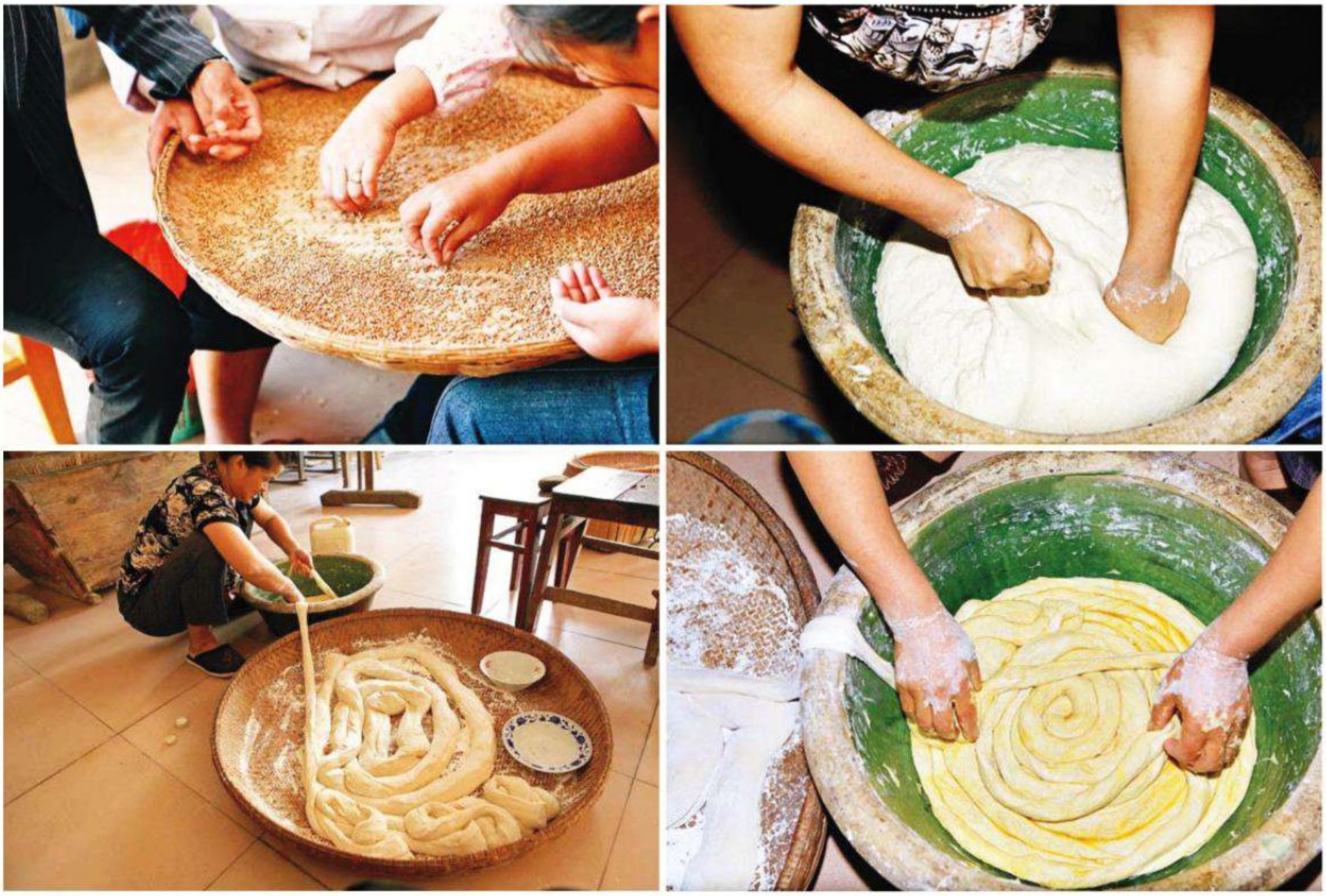


Noodle Nostalgia

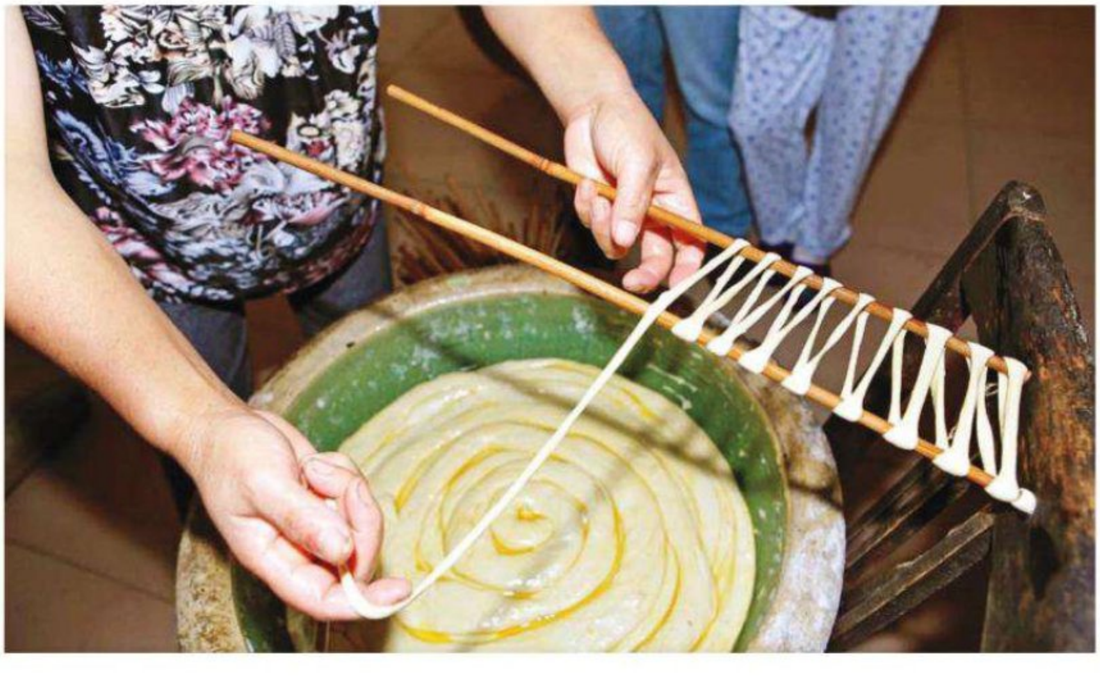
Text and photographs by Li Shuangxi

A nostalgic delicacy.

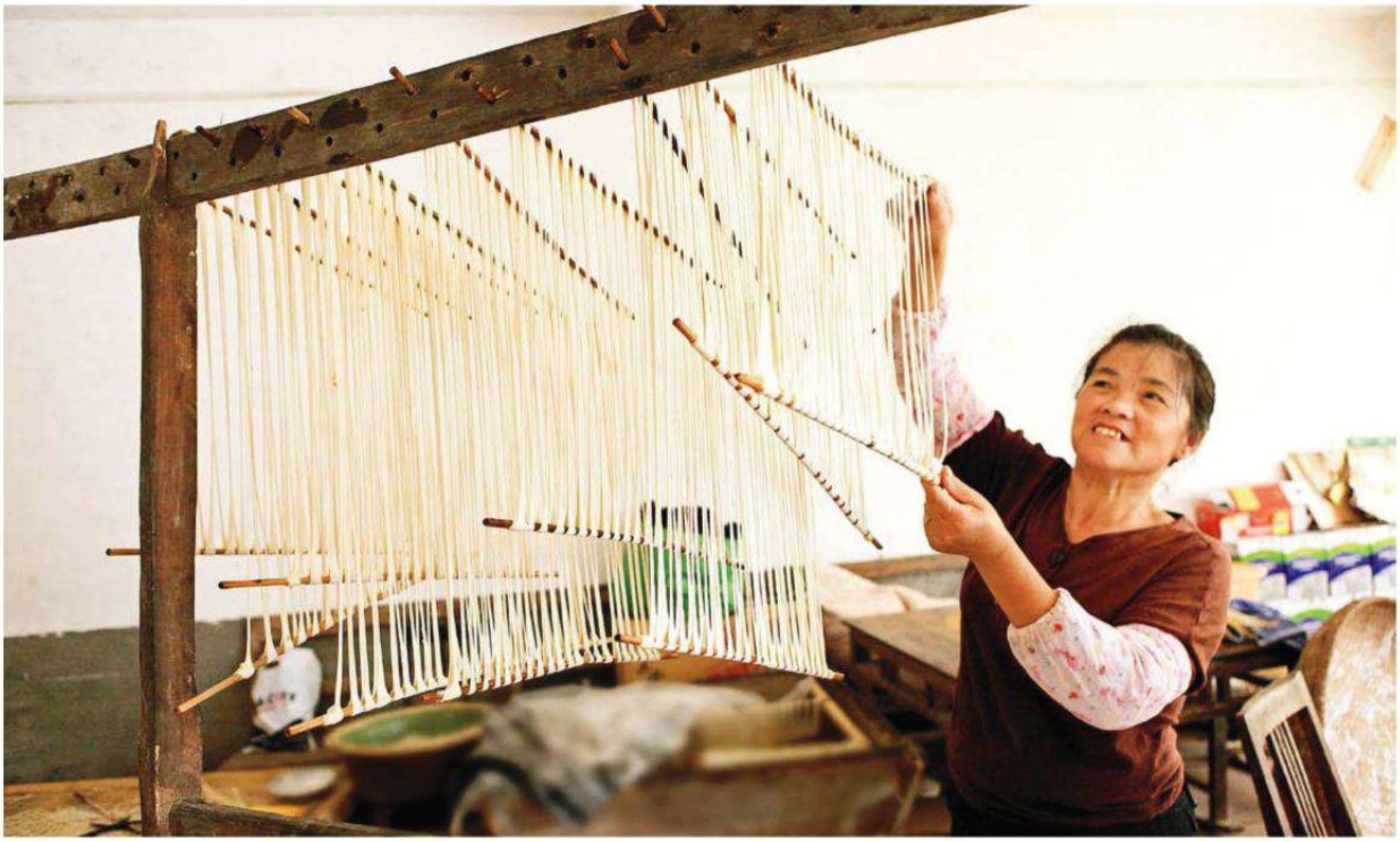
Legend goes that when Marco Polo returned home after his journey to China, he brought noodles from the Oriental nation, contributing to the advent of Italian pasta. This particular theory is far from universally accepted, but an article in the October 2005 issue of British *Nature* magazine described the discovery of a 4,000-year-old bowl of noodles from an archaeological site in China's western province of Qinghai. While northern Chinese residents tend to use noodles as a staple, those in the central areas save noodles for special dishes rather than daily meals. During festivals and special occasions, housewives serve a variety of dishes created from wheat flour.



Oil and salt are added for taste and preservation.



Coiling the noodles around chopsticks.



Stretching the noodles.

Draped noodles resemble a waterfall.

People in Jiangxi, my home province, produce a dried noodle, which is locally known as "oil noodle" because the addition of oil and salt help preserve it for a long time even in hot and humid weather. Still, it's all-natural, created from home-produced flour and canola oil. Cooking it is simple too: Put oil in boiling water before the noodles, and then add chopped green onions before serving. Sometimes, cooked rice is boiled with the noodles to produce a singularly tasty mixture, which remains one of my favorite hometown treats.

My last trip home coincided with the birth of my nephew. Following local customs, my mother personally made "oil noodles" and invited all the villagers to share what is colloquially known as "happy noodles." The endeavor to make the noodles required the assistance of a rack, a holed platform, chopsticks, and a basin. After kneading oil and salt into the dough, Mom rolled it into thin strands and wound them around a pair of chopsticks before letting them sit. After a while, she hung the noodles from the rack, which was so high that she had to use her tiptoes to reach it. One of the chopsticks rested on top of the rack while the other hung naturally. Then she stretched the noodles, a step that requires more skill than strength because optimum noodle elasticity can be achieved by rhythmic pulling. Seeing the process again brought my memory back to my childhood, when I often joined my mother pulling the noodles, making it a game as I watched the threads sway gently in the breeze like silk curtains.

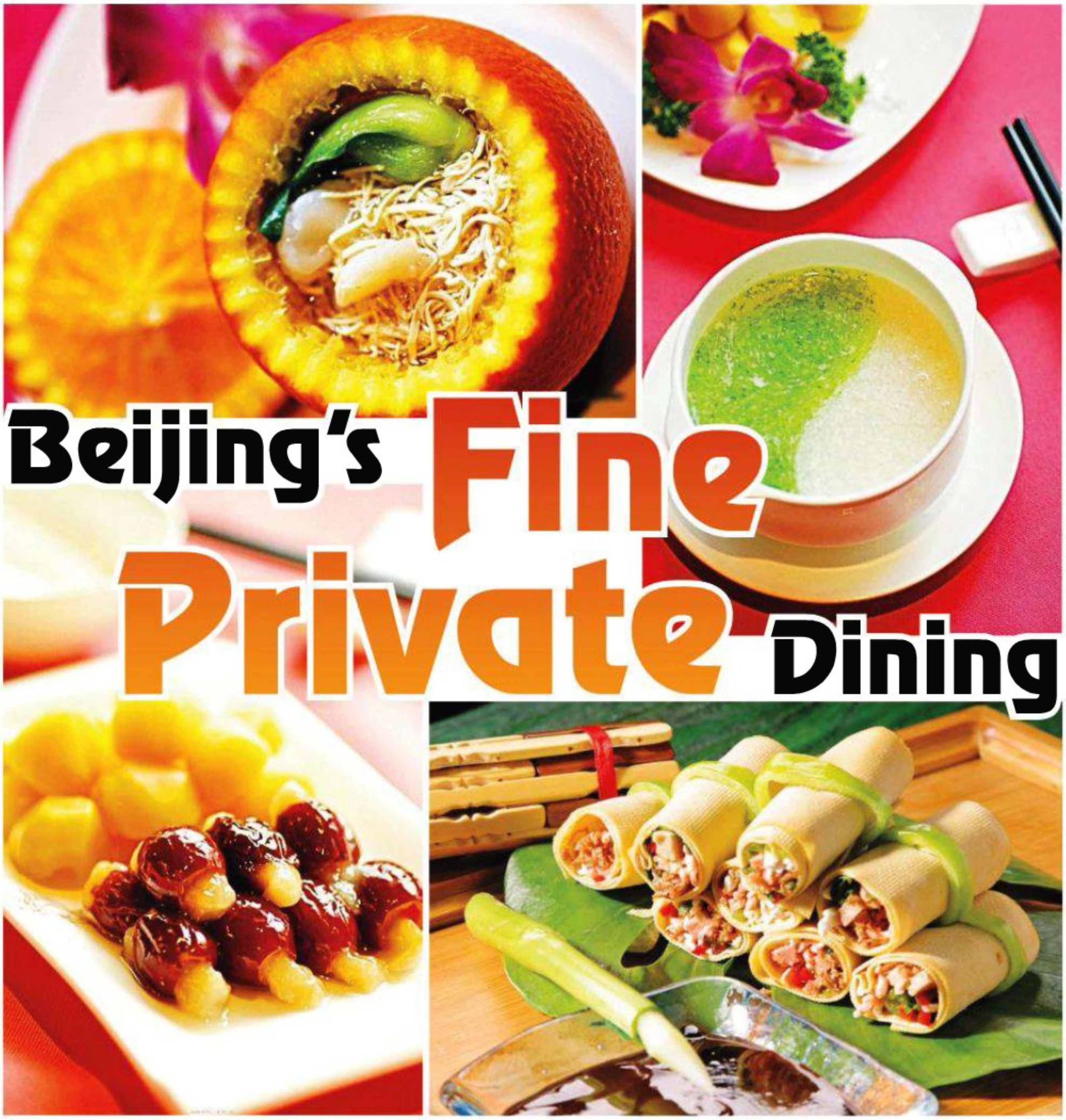
After about a half hour, the noodles almost stretched to the floor, and my mother inserted the lower chopstick into the holed platform. Then, she moved the rack outdoors to dry the noodles. When they were half dried, Mom removed the noodles and tied them in bundles. Finally, they were ready to be cooked.

Every time my mother visited me in Beijing, she took a large bundle of her homemade noodles. I wasn't fond of them as a child, but these days I love them, because they allow me to taste a bit of my hometown while I'm so far away. Mom jokes that I won't be able to find the "oil noodle" after she grows too old to make it. Indeed, even in my hometown, the younger generation prefers to buy dried noodles in supermarkets. It seems likely that after another decade of dizzyingly accelerated urbanization across the country, this tradition will remain only in the memories of those lucky enough to have experienced it. When contemplating the oil noodle's inevitable demise, I can't help but envision the thin strands in my mother's kitchen swaying back and forth, leaving me feeling alone with a lingering nostalgia.

Ready for cooking.

Air drying the noodles.

Beijing's Fine Private Dining



Text by Zhao Yue
Photographs by Wei Ming

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, legendary boxer Muhammad Ali and Microsoft founder Bill Gates all dined at the same restaurant when visiting Beijing. Most would assume it was a luxurious eatery in a Shangri-La or Hilton Hotel or one of Beijing's myriad five-star hotspots, but they would all be wrong. The restaurant, hidden in an unremarkable *hutong* in Beijing's Houhai area, has fed numerous celebrities from China and around the world even though its exterior is less than glamorous. In summer, it tends to get shaded by dense foliage, and in winter it is often covered by mountains of snow, making it somewhat difficult to find. Still, the seemingly humble hideaway is well-known amongst dining connoisseurs: the Li Family Restaurant.

Li Family Restaurant's prosperity confirms the adage "good wine needs no bush." Although the business has expanded in recent years, opening branches in Shanghai, Tianjin, and even Melbourne and Tokyo, the original eatery has changed little over the past several decades. The *siheyuan* (quadrangle courtyard) where the Li family has lived for generations isn't much different from its neighbors other than the few red characters reading "No. 11 Yangfang Hutong" on the white wooden door plate. Hardly a fancy decoration can be found in the house. Guests sit around simple round tables and have no say in which dishes will be served. Everything is decided by the chef.

Legend of the Li Family

The Li Family Restaurant may be one of the most renowned spots for "private cuisine" in town, but the dining genre itself is probably unfamiliar to most. The concept is actually quite simple: visitors eat the best of what the host has to offer. The story of the Li Family Restaurant is already legendary, and it aptly depicts the concept of private cuisine in Beijing.

The restaurant is managed by 90-year-old mathematics professor Li Shanlin, whose grandfather was Minister of Household Affairs for the Imperial Court of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Combining the essence of Qing imperial cuisine with contemporary nutrition principles and a life-long passion for food, Li Shanlin founded the business.

As a high-ranking official in the Qing Court, Li's grandfather was responsible for security and dining management in the Forbidden City. Planning state banquets, managing the menu, and designing dishes were all part of his duty. Through the years, he learned every secret of imperial cuisine. After he retired, the elder Li wrote down as much as he could retrieve from memory, such as recipes of many aristocratic dishes (considered top national secrets at the time), and instructed his household chefs how to prepare them. Growing up in such a family, Li Shanlin not only inherited his grandfather's fondness for cooking, but also his treasured recipes.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Li endured countless ups and downs, but has always enjoyed cooking at home, as do his three daughters and son. However, for a long time, they never considered opening a restaurant. The turning point came in 1984 when China Central Television held a "National Day Banquet Invitational Competition." Li's second daughter, Li Li, beat out over 3,000 chefs from all over China to win the event. When the media interviewed the champ, they were surprised to find that no one in her large family was a professional chef. After more encouragement was gained through hosting a series of parties, the Li Family finally opened its restaurant in May of 1985.

Li Shanli, founder of the Li Family Restaurant.

Aside from its wooden door plate, not much can be found at the entrance of the Li Family Restaurant.

Mei Mansion Banquet has become a museum dedicated to the great Peking Opera artist Mei Lanfang.

One of Mei's costumes displayed at the Mei Mansion Banquet.

Stories Behind Private Cuisine

Just the mention of Mei Lanfang's name thrills most Peking Opera fans. So it's no surprise that an eatery with close ties to the performer would choose to include his name for the front doors of the establishment. The owner of Mei Mansion Banquet, located at Dafengxiang Hutong in Beijing's Xicheng District, is a fan of Mei who converted the former residence of a Qing prince into the now famous restaurant. In cooperation with Mei's kin, the restaurant eventually evolved into a museum dedicated to the Peking Opera master. Mei Baojiu, Mei's son and honorary chairman of the restaurant, decorated the mansion with his father's authentic tableware, cameras, calligraphy, paintings, and furniture. And most importantly, he donated about 600 recipes he inherited.

Dishes served at the Mei Mansion Banquet were handed down from chefs who worked for the Mei family decades ago. Many of those currently employed by the restaurant are third or fourth generation protégés of chef Wang Shoushan, who personally served the Peking Opera master. In Mei's time, he would invite three tables of guests to dine at his home after daily performances. One table would seat his family, one for his friends, and the other for students and musicians. During major festivals and important occasions, more would be invited.

The evolution of both Li Family Restaurant and Mei Mansion Banquet are closely tied to the development of the country. In the times when private businesses were forbidden, such indulgences could only be enjoyed by close friends and relatives. Unlike many big name restaurants that built respectable brands over their long histories, private cuisine eateries started relatively recently as microscopic businesses before the successful ones mushroomed along with the country's prosperity.

After China launched reform and opening up in 1978, the country underwent tremendous social and economic change. Over the past 30 years, Beijing has gradually become one of the most important gourmet meccas of not only the country, but the world. Although some are easier to find than others, people from anywhere on earth can probably locate their favorite hometown dish somewhere in the city. The sprawling metropolis is home to both large luxurious restaurants grilling high-end steaks and small shabby stands serving simple meals for neighborhood residents. Fueled by the expanding market economy, private cuisine restaurants have enjoyed rapid development in recent years, quickly becoming favorites of more discerning diners.

Searching for Private Cuisine

Nowadays, Beijing's private cuisine can be divided into two categories. The first is considered aristocratic cuisine, such as dishes served by the Li family. Usually known only by a reputable family name, these kitchens enjoy lofty esteem and comparatively longer histories. Tan Family cuisine, for example, originally only served friends before moving into Beijing Hotel to become the accommodation's primary attraction.

These restaurants, characterized by legendary stories dating back decades, are mysterious and fascinating to fine dining novices. However, the second type of private cuisine is quickly gaining popularity. Usually founded by food connoisseurs and critics, these eateries embody a new understanding of private cuisine in a new era. Often occupying tiny spaces, they are mostly located in *hutong*s in older areas and attach great importance on communication with guests. While some argue that these establishments are little more than fads compared to historied private cuisine places, others consider them just as much part of the inheritance, but from a different perspective. Although newer now, many are sure to survive decades or even centuries, and someday they too may inspire legendary tales and become time-honored brands.

The history and culture of food are always closely tied to a region's people and social development. In this aspect, much can be learned about today's Beijingers from the places they consider best to eat.

Private cuisine attaches great importance to environment as well as the taste. CFP

Urban Farming

Text by Zhao Yue

When speaking of their passion,
most tend to fill the conversation
with technical terms that
testify to their expertise.
One such expert,
Li Chunyan,
loves to discuss how to grow vegetables at home.

Homegrown vegetables on a balcony, Xi'an City. ***CFP***

Fantastic Experience

Her words are as precise and professional as hosts of agricultural TV programs. "Some plants blossom easily, while others are more difficult," she explains. "You should pay special attention when watering seedlings. While some plants should be watered with tea, it's better to use water used to wash rice for others. Remember to change the potting soil regularly. Add fresh mud from a pond when you do so."

Li Chunyan, a 32-year-old white-collar worker, lives in Beijing. Like many urban residents, she leads the 9-to-5 life. Although most of her days are similar to millions of others, her balcony is singular. She fills the six-square-meter space with pots of radishes, ginger, chilis, and Chinese cabbage. Her farming hobby began accidentally. For a long time, her balcony sat unused until some words from her husband sparked a new idea. "What a shame that we leave such a nice space empty!" he remarked. "If we grew vegetables there, we could harvest enough for the whole family."

Li started right away. "I found two discarded plastic containers, filled them with soil, and bought fertilizer and seeds," she illustrates. She tried tomatoes first. Although the green seedlings delighted her, their growth quickly slowed and the stems began to wither. The rough start didn't discourage Li, and she countered by reading farming books for instruction. Soon, she achieved her first harvest of plentiful chilis, chives, and cabbage. "Now I spend an average of 10 to 20 minutes on my vegetables daily." Watering, fertilizing, weeding, and turning the soil became an indispensable part of her life. And even things she formerly considered waste, such as water melon rind and bean dregs, became organic fertilizer.

With easy-to-get soil and seeds, many urban Chinese are now growing vegetables at homes. To share their successes and failures, many document their farming progress on blogs, from seeding, sprouting, budding, and flowering, to harvest. Forums emerged where netizens could discuss vegetable planting.

Chen Xiaoyi began growing vegetables in 2008. At first, she had no idea what to plant or how to grow it. Without specific plans, she buried five kinds of seeds in some soil, such as Chinese cabbage, lettuce, celery, and leeks. Only the Chinese cabbage matured enough to produce a harvest. "I didn't deserve much credit," she admits. "You can find Chinese cabbage everywhere in China – evidence that the vegetable doesn't demand much from the soil or climate." Over the past three years, however, Chen's interest in farming has blossomed. She even bought six pots and a set of professional tools for vegetable planting during a business trip to Japan.

Loving Homegrown Vegetables

A variety of motivations spur growers to plant vegetables at home, but some reasons are more common than others. Vegetables from home counter rising prices and increasing food safety concerns, along with the satisfying sense of accomplishment from seeing vegetables from planting to harvest.

The prices of major vegetables rose 10.1 percent in September and October 2010 alone, according to China's National Development and Reform Commission. Since the recent rise in vegetable prices, growing vegetables at home is an increasingly economically sound practice. A planter can purchase 100 to 120 pea seeds online for only two yuan, and the grown plant can provide a meal for four. A two-yuan bag of lettuce seeds can become more than five kilograms of vegetables.

Some are most concerned about food safety. Li Shan began growing vegetables at home when her daughter was born in 2009. "I don't dare feed her vegetables from the market," she asserts. "Even organic vegetables in supermarkets may be covered with pesticides. But if I grow them myself, the problem is solved. I can be absolutely sure that no chemicals have ever been used."

Choosing seedlings. IC

Fertilizing. IC

For others, the most satisfying product is the joy and pleasant disposition that growing enables. "I don't make a big deal selecting the vegetables I am going to plant," reveals Li Chunyan. "I just plant the easier choices and care little whether I have a big harvest. Maturing vegetables are beautiful and add much-needed green to the city." The rise of home-grown vegetables indicates a stronger self-protection awareness of urbanites. "I used to eat tomatoes year-round, but now I know that natural tomatoes are only available in summer. Off-season fruit sold at markets is grown in greenhouses with fertilizers to accelerate maturity, making it less healthy."

The longing for pure and natural food has become increasingly widespread. Although they still patronize local markets, some, like Li, began only purchasing in-season produce after the home-growing experience enlightened them.

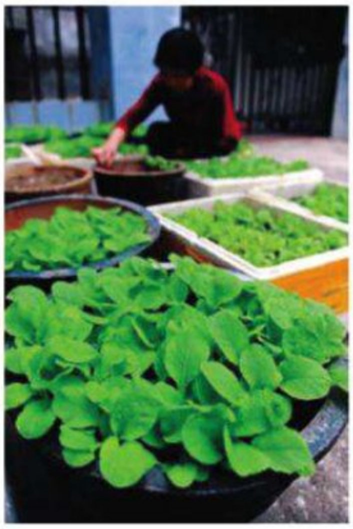
New Opportunities

"Xiaoliu at Home" is an online store at China's largest internet marketplace, Taobao.com, which sells vegetable and flower seeds. On its home page, it reveals that in the past 30 days, there were 349 purchases of radish seeds alone. The shop owner is the daughter of a farmer, and she has loved growing vegetables since childhood. She even set up discussion groups for those growing vegetables at home. The shop sells not only Chinese vegetables, but also some rarely-seen foreign produce, such as basil, rosemary, Swiss beet, and Japanese radish. Over the past 12 months, the shop's customer flow has increased rapidly, largely because of satisfied customer recommendations to their friends.

This is only one of numerous shops selling vegetable seeds online. A search for the term "vegetable seeds" on Taobao will produce 78,833 results. And amidst Beijing's urban bustle are several large pet and flower markets where a great variety of vegetable seeds in small packages are sold. Actually, home vegetable farms have become a hot new consumer trend, and their popularity isn't limited to the Chinese mainland — urban growers can also be found in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan. The municipal government of London has even started encouraging its citizens to transform balconies, roofs, and any other open residential space into farmland. In this way, urban families' produce supply can be subsistent, greatly reducing the necessary transport to bring food into town. Both a family's food budget and carbon emissions from transportation will be reduced. Additionally, vegetation on roofs and balconies add a healthy green and help save heating and cooling energy.

Farmland or garden? CFP

"Most of my clients are city dwellers, and they plant in pots at home," remarks Ms. Huang, who operates a seed shop for vegetables and flowers in Beijing's Guanyuan Pet and Flower Market. "Retail sales account for 70 percent of my total business." And according to an online seed shop, the bulk price for 100 packs of vegetable seeds is 280 yuan, but the price for one single pack is four yuan. Behind small seeds hide the necessary profit margins to enable some big business.

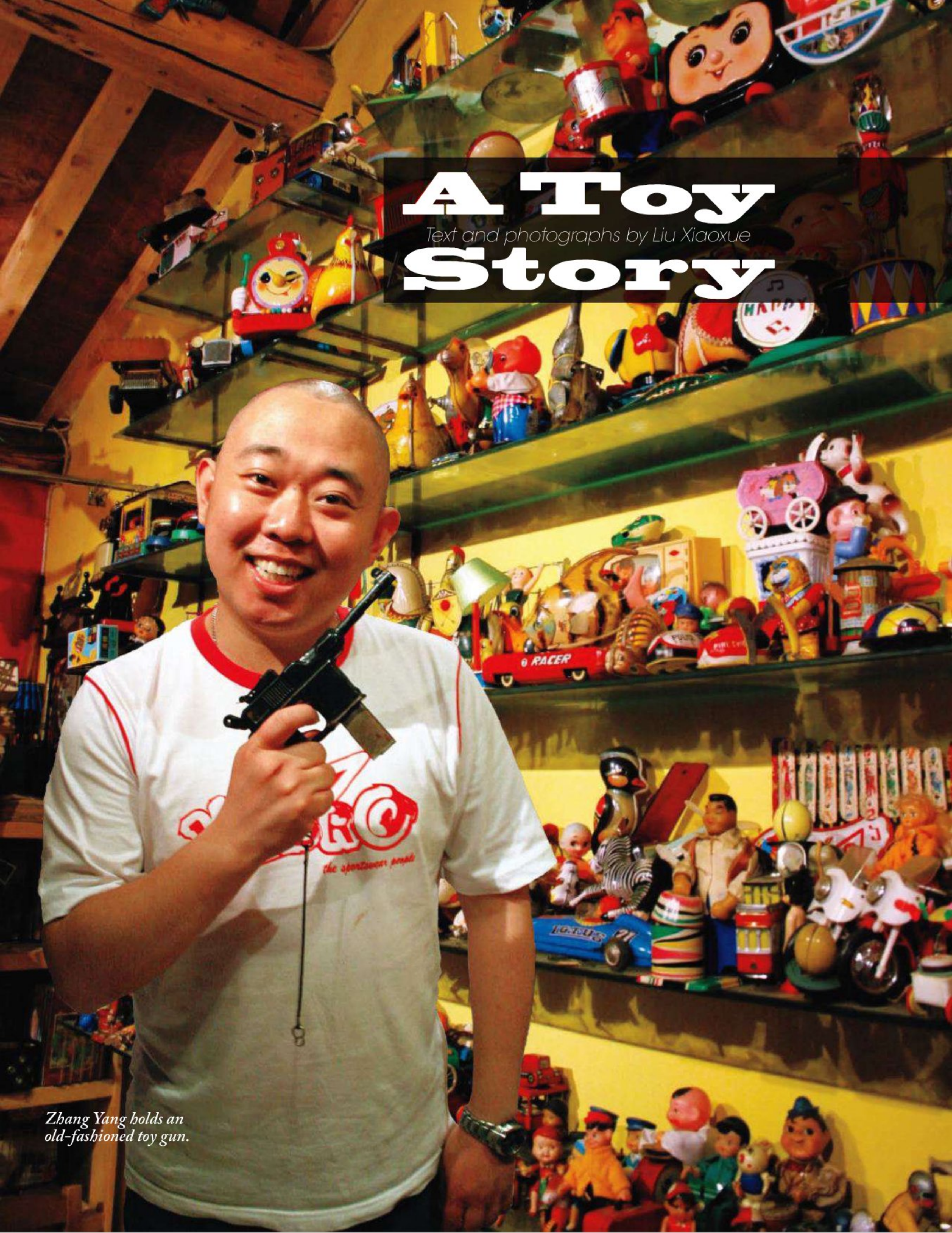


Growing vegetables has become a good way to relax. IC

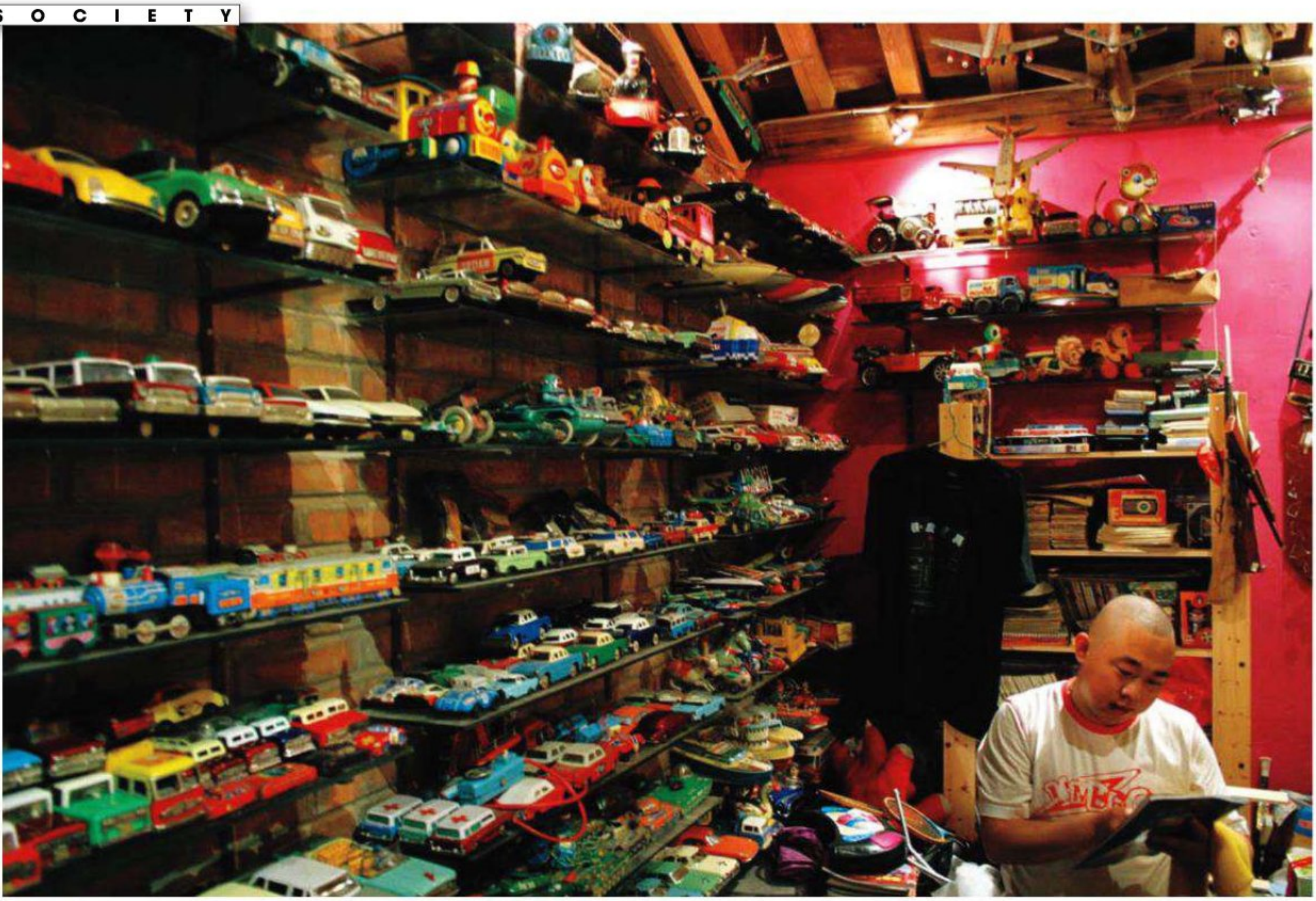
Urban green oasis. IC

A Toy Story

Text and photographs by Liu Xiaoxue



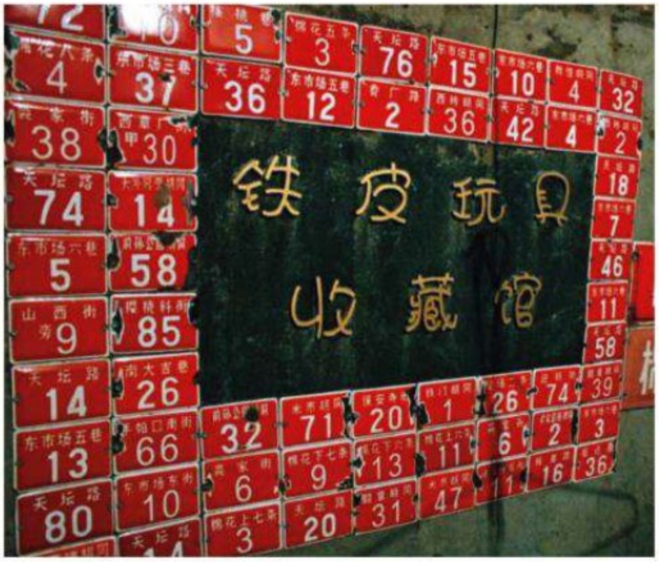
Zhang Yang holds an old-fashioned toy gun.



Packed with tin toys.

For many, toys win prominent positions in childhood memories, but those memories gradually fade as the years pass. For most adults, worries related to work and family life consume the carefree innocence of the childhood years. But some long to better preserve the past through collecting vintage toys. For them, just glancing at a historic toy can make treasured childhood memories rise from the dead. Zhang Yang, owner of a private tin toy museum, is one such collector.

Besides tin toys, Zhang Yang also collects nameplates of demolished Beijing lanes.



Tin Toy Museum

I met Zhang Yang and his wife at 8 p.m. at the entrance of Xidi Hutong, where their tin toy museum is located. After passing rows and rows of traditional residences with black-tiled roofs, we finally reached the eye-catching orange facade of their small compound, featuring two Chinese characters meaning "tin toy" followed by a red character molded after a seal carving that means "collection." Red lanterns hung under the eaves to further complement the archaic aura of the tin toy museum.

A 10-square-meter room serves as the exhibition hall, packed with a plethora of toys ranging from vehicles to animals. A row of tin airplanes hung from the ceiling, banking back and forth with each gust of wind. Dozens of tin toy guns were fixed to the beams. According to Zhang, the room is home to more than 1,500 tin toys in total, but his most valuable pieces are kept at home.

Collecting Fun

Each of Zhang's toys is the fruit of a bittersweet process. To find some discontinued tin toys, Zhang scours second-hand markets in every corner of the city. For this reason, many dealers at the markets know him. Once he finds something he wants, he will pay almost any price. He often spends all of his monthly salary on old tin toys. He also frequents the recycling station near his home. His neighbors often watch him chase carts, hoping to find some old tin treasures. "I found those in a recycling station," Zhang remarks, pointing to three tin cars in the corner of the room. "I offered the recycler 10 yuan, and he seemed more than happy to accept. Actually, though, I was happier than him. For me, these toys are priceless treasures. My greatest thrill is finding a long-desired tin toy."

A miniature replica of a hydraulic forging press rests unnoticeable in the corner of the room. However, Zhang considers it the most valuable piece in his collection. The tin replica is modeled after China's first 12,000-ton hydraulic forging press produced by Jiangnan Shipyard in 1961, and is considered a priceless collectable due to its extreme rarity. Someone once offered Zhang 80,000 yuan for it, but he refused.

The reason Zhang cherishes the piece isn't so much its considerable market value, but rather the astonishing luck he needed to acquire it. During a summer holiday over a decade ago, he was playing ping pong at a local school. When he went to the restroom, he spotted the toy lying amidst a pile of tin treasures, which would be considered junk to anyone else. "At that moment, I forgot about the toilet," Zhang laughs with unconcealed zeal, "and rather hurried to find a teacher, who told me that it was a teaching tool that had been left unused, so I quickly bought it."

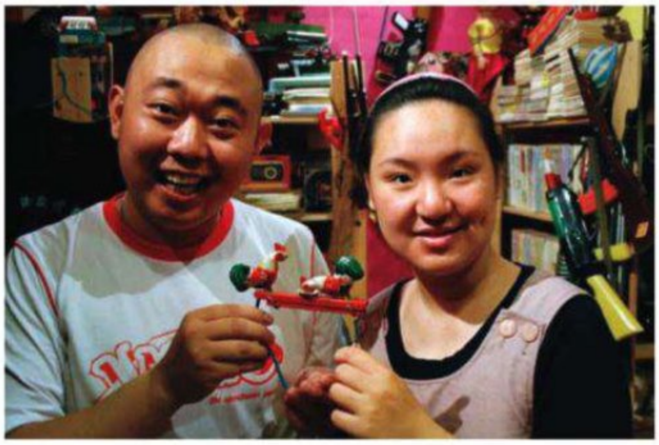
Many of the pieces in his collection are adorned with foreign-language nameplates. Zhang and his wife found many of those during trips abroad, but actually some were made in China. "Decades ago, when tin toys were popular around the world, most of the toys made in China were only exported," he explains. "So even though they were born here, we can only find them abroad."

"This one was imported by Beijing Toy Factory as a reference for its own toy design," Zhang illustrates with a Russian toy car.

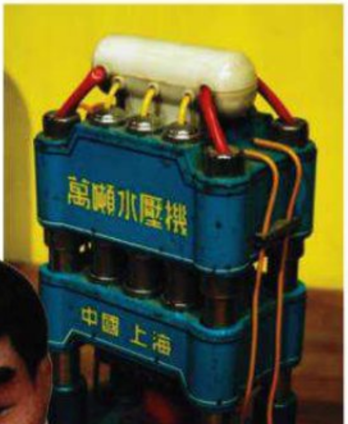
Childhood Memories

Because Zhang and his wife both keep full-time day jobs, their museum doesn't open until 8 p.m. "Many visitors don't leave until midnight," he notes. "Gradually, some patrons and I have become close friends. Occasionally, we gather for potluck dinners to share our fondest memories about our favorite childhood toys."

For Zhang and his wife, the museum houses not only tin toys, but also countless cherished childhood memories. "Beijingers who were born in the 1980s grew up in *hutong*s and played with tin toys when they were children," Zhang explains. The museum is located in a *hutong*, which helps kindle visitors' nostalgia. The museum also includes nameplates of some demolished *hutong*s, further reminding patrons of yesteryear.



Both Zhang Yang and his wife are crazy about collecting tin toys.



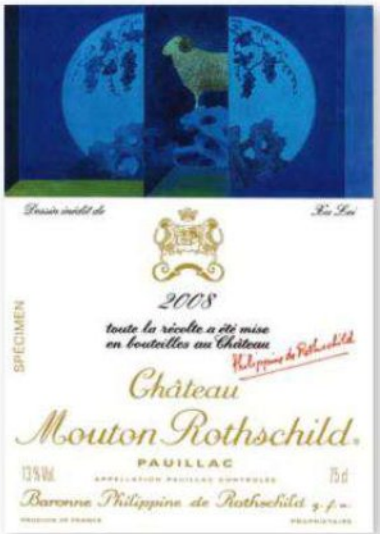
A miniature replica of China's first 12,000-ton hydraulic forging press produced by Jiangnan Shipyard in 1961.

A string-driven toy magician that can perform tricks.

The Grapes of Prosperity

Text and photographs by Zhou Jin

When the 2008 Olympics turned the global spotlight to China, it also opened the eyes of wine producers around the world. Already famously popular in China, Chateau Lafite Rothschild added an embossed red Chinese character "八" (meaning "eight," an auspicious number in Chinese culture) to its vintage 2008 bottles.



Chateau Mouton Rothschild, one of France's prestigious First Growths, invited Chinese painter Xu Lei to design its 2008 label.

Lafite's adoption of a Chinese element is not just coincidence. Perhaps connoisseurs don't all consider Lafite the pinnacle of wine, but for Chinese novices, Lafite is more attractive. In China, the brand has come to symbolize wealth and social status, attracting a growing legion of followers. Along with increasing demand, its price has soared dramatically. Even the price tag for Carruades de Lafite, a second label, has eclipsed card-carrying wines of other First Growths, frustrating and confusing the chateau's overseas rivals.

At recent years' Bordeaux wine auctions and wine futures trading, the target market of high-end wines shifted from U.S. and U.K. to China, and Hong Kong wine auctions now attract highly competitive Chinese millionaires. In the industry, some laugh that every label is "either in China, or on the way to China."

An interesting anecdote has recently been circulating among insiders: When British wine author Jancis Robinson visited Hong Kong-based wine critic Jeannie Cho Lee, he asked, "Why on earth do the Chinese love Lafite so much?" Lee replied with a sly grin, "Because its Chinese name is easy to pronounce." Humor aside, the story sheds light on the reason why many foreign chateaus are working to replace the original awkward-sounding Chinese names of their products with new characters that are easy to read, speak, and remember while injecting connotations of good fortune.

Purchasing vintage wine has become a new option for investors in China's cosmopolitan cities like Beijing and Shanghai. A senior Bordeaux *en primeur* trader (investing in wine before it is bottled) once revealed to *Decanter* magazine that according to the usual practice, a new *en primeur* barrel tends to experience an initial price jump before entering a period of stagnancy. Five to seven years later, when the wine is good for drinking, its price will rise again. However, the wine frenzy in China is another story — the abrupt, explosive demands for fine wine go far beyond what the chateaus can supply, and the buyers with deep pockets will not miss the chance at any bottle, regardless of whether the wine is ready for drinking. In

recent months, prices for many chateaus' second wines, including Les Forts de Latour, Petit Mouton de Chateau Mouton, and Pavillon Rouge de Margaux, have appreciated considerably. Some Guangdong-based investors went on a spree collecting Pavillon Rouge de Margaux, showing a tendency to hoard and speculate.

As more Chinese people gain wealth, increasing numbers of youngsters have developed a fondness for red wine, some with the economic means to invest in the beverage. Kuang Qijun, now 28, fell in love with wine when he was still in college. After graduation, he invested in wine firms and clubs. His wine collection includes many bottles from Bordeaux chateaus, Britain, and Hong Kong. "No one can say which kind of wine is the best," Kuang declares, "but you can tell the best bottle." His interest in wine is fueled by its contrast with other luxury products.

"You can tell whether it is a good wine only after uncorking the bottle to taste it," Kuang continues. "I purchase cases with my friends and we share because it's hard for me to drink that much myself within a certain period, and the original packaging better protects the wine from deterioration." Fearing that frequent trading can negatively affect the preservation and quality of wine, Kuang buys directly from well-respected retailers like Bordeaux Index, despite higher prices.

As an investor, Kuang can clearly distinguish between wines more fitting for commercial or social purposes and those which should be collected or enjoyed privately. "In many eyes, high-end watches are worthy of being handed down for generations, and I think the same can be said of wine," Kuang remarks. According to him, while watch owners may treasure the item any time by glancing at the hands spinning on their wrists, the appreciation of the value of a fine wine can only be realized the moment it is tasted.

Chinese wine enthusiasts have also stunned overseas auction houses with their wealth. Sotheby's, one of the world's leading auction houses, declared that Hong Kong surpassed New York and London as the most important wine auction location.

Meanwhile, wine culture has become prevalent in Chinese mainland cities. Beijing now has a red wine museum, and newer high-end apartments in Shanghai are usually equipped with wine racks. French and Italian chateaus have organized various activities in China to promote their drinks and invited industry professionals and media to visit their grapevines, hoping to help improve Chinese consumers' taste in wine.

Following brand-name handbags, suits, and sports cars, expensive French and Italian wines have emerged as new necessities for the Chinese elite. Today, if you receive an invite to a formal party in China, you'd better not miss the chance to mingle with the new generation of wealthy who appreciate wine, cigars, and art. Some have characterized the Chinese "Lafite phenomenon" as a bubble, but this hypothesis will only prove true if it bursts. Only time will tell, and like those connoisseurs waiting for the perfect moment to uncork their favorite vintage, we will have to wait.

SAINT-EMILION · POMEROL · FRONSAC
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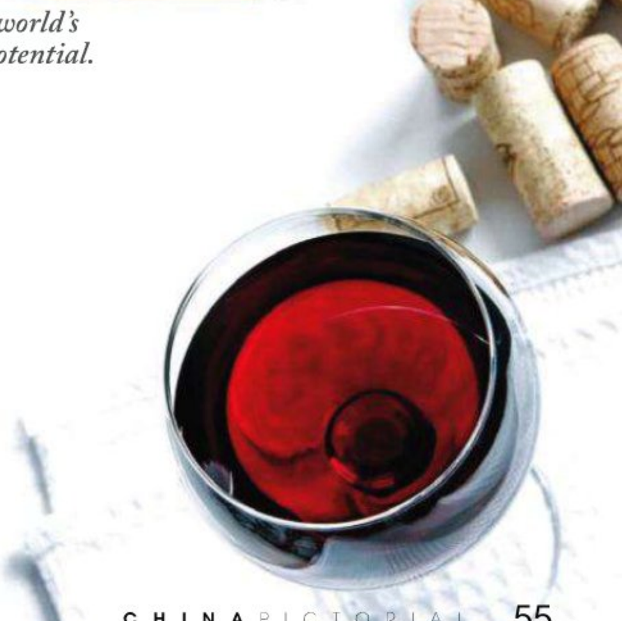
2010.11.22

Many Western chateaus have organized various activities in China to promote their drinks.

Savoring red wine has become a popular trend in China.

富隆
加盟富隆
西海一家 美酒荟萃

China is now considered the world's wine market with the most potential.



Locomotive Innovation

Text by Zhu Huiyue and Qin Jiajing
Photographs by Chen Jian

Ding Rongjun, general manager of ZELRI.

On December 26, 2009, China's passenger rail line with the latest technology, greatest length, and largest investment – the Wuhan-Guangzhou High-speed Railway – went into operation. The inaugural group of CRH electric multiple unit (EMU) trains have a designed speed of 350 kilometers per hour, equipped with Chinese-made "hearts" (electric traction drive system) and "brains" (train network control units). Along with the cutting-edge technology, its designer, CSR Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Research Institute Co., Ltd. (ZELRI), attracted a spotlight.

Known as the birthplace of the Chinese electric locomotive, ZELRI is based in Tianxin Town of Hunan Province's Zhuzhou City. ZELRI is China's only enterprise holding independent intellectual property rights to rail electric traction drive systems and a pioneer in railway equipment manufacturing. Its original incarnation, Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Research Institute, was established by the Chinese Ministry of Railways (MOR) in 1959.

In the 1960s, ZELRI joined hands with Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Plant to produce the Shaoshan I locomotive, China's first generation of electric trains for both cargo and passenger transportation on domestic railways. Since then, ZELRI has played a role in nearly every Chinese electric locomotive research and development project. In the 1990s, when AC drive systems reached a new level of development, ZELRI worked with China's major locomotive manufacturers to promote application of the technology in a variety of rail vehicles including not only electric trains, but also diesel locomotives, large railroad maintenance machinery, engineering maintenance vehicles, EMUs, maglev trains, and light rail vehicles. So far, the technology has been utilized in tens of thousands of Chinese locomotives and even exported to Kazakhstan.

Since the turn of the 21st century, MOR has initiated

a new phase of foreign technology introduction and absorption. ZELRI responded by introducing technology developed by Mitsubishi and Siemens. Thanks to an accumulation of technology over several decades, ZELRI has demonstrated the acumen not only to absorb foreign technology, but also to use it to inspire its own independent innovation. Through learning from foreign 200kph EMUs, ZELRI domestically developed several key components such as electric traction drive systems and network control units that helped enable Chinese-made EMU trains to handle 300 kilometers per hour. In 2007, China launched its sixth national rail acceleration campaign. Of the first group of 52 EMU trains that went into operation, 36 were equipped with AC drive and network control systems designed by ZELRI.

In 2009, the Wuhan-Guangzhou High-speed Railway began operation, marking the implementation of ZELRI technology enabling 350kph trains. Currently, ZELRI is developing an AC traction system, a network control system, and an information monitoring system for Chinese-made EMU trains that could enable speeds of 380kph or higher.

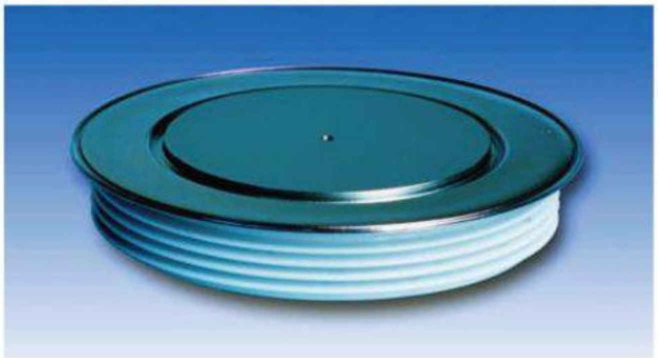
Additionally, ZELRI has made remarkable breakthroughs in high-power IGBT module technology, breaking into a field previously dominated by foreign companies, while making great contributions in promoting China's development in ultra-high voltage DC transmission technology and safeguarding the nation's power supply system. This helped China overcome foreign technological advantages, safeguard national economic strategies, and meet market demands for rail transportation and smart grid. For this reason, ZELRI was praised by China's top leaders including Premier Wen Jiabao.

ZELRI has already developed core technology such as AC drives, network controls, and high-powered semiconductor devices. Its mastery of AC drive system assembly technology made China one of only a few countries capable of such innovation, joining Germany, France, Switzerland, and Canada.

"Our company has long adhered to the principle of respecting knowledge and talent," remarks Ding Rongjun, general manager of ZELRI. "Human resources constitute the most valuable component of our assets." Throughout its history, ZELRI has reformed its human resource management to encourage employees to dedicate more energy to the work.

ZELRI invested more than 2 billion yuan in building high voltage frequency conversion as well as electromag-

Electric buses produced by ZELRI.



netic compatibility laboratories and testing facilities. It has established industrial bases for electric vehicles, semiconductors, sensors, and wind power, and invests eight percent of its annual revenue to scientific research such as building advanced R&D platforms and improving engineering capacity. It has strengthened vocational training of its employees and established a competitive human resource management system. ZELRI has emerged as a frontrunner in China's railway equipment and new energy industries.

Since the beginning of the 11th Five-Year Plan Period (2006-2010), ZELRI has been committed to developing bridge bearings with new material, which can improve the safety and stability of high-speed railways, light rails, highroad bridges and other structures. Its new products are already being used in the Beijing-Tianjin and Wuhan-Guangzhou High-speed Railways, and light rail markets of Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenyang. In June 2008, the first phase of its electric vehicle plant was completed. In August 2008, the electric vehicles produced by ZELRI served the Beijing Olympics, without any malfunction while cutting fuel costs by an estimated 40 percent. Additionally, it has made great breakthroughs in the wind power industry. In April 2008, ZELRI and China Huadian Corporation signed a strategic cooperation agreement to develop Huadian 142 WT1650 wind power generation units, with a total value of 1.4 billion yuan, within three years. In July 2010, Yangtianhu Wind Farm, known as the first of its kind in Hunan Province, installed wind turbines produced by ZELRI. Also, ZELRI has completed internal integration of its power conversion business, estimated to realize a revenue of 500 million yuan in 2010.

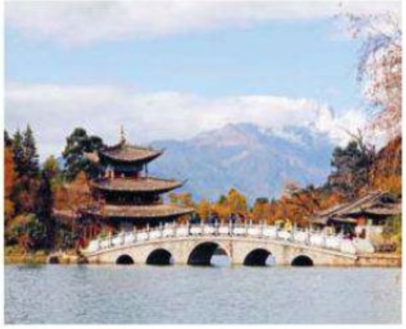
The wind turbine workshop.

ZELRI has proven itself a bastion of innovation.

A lake in Lijiang.

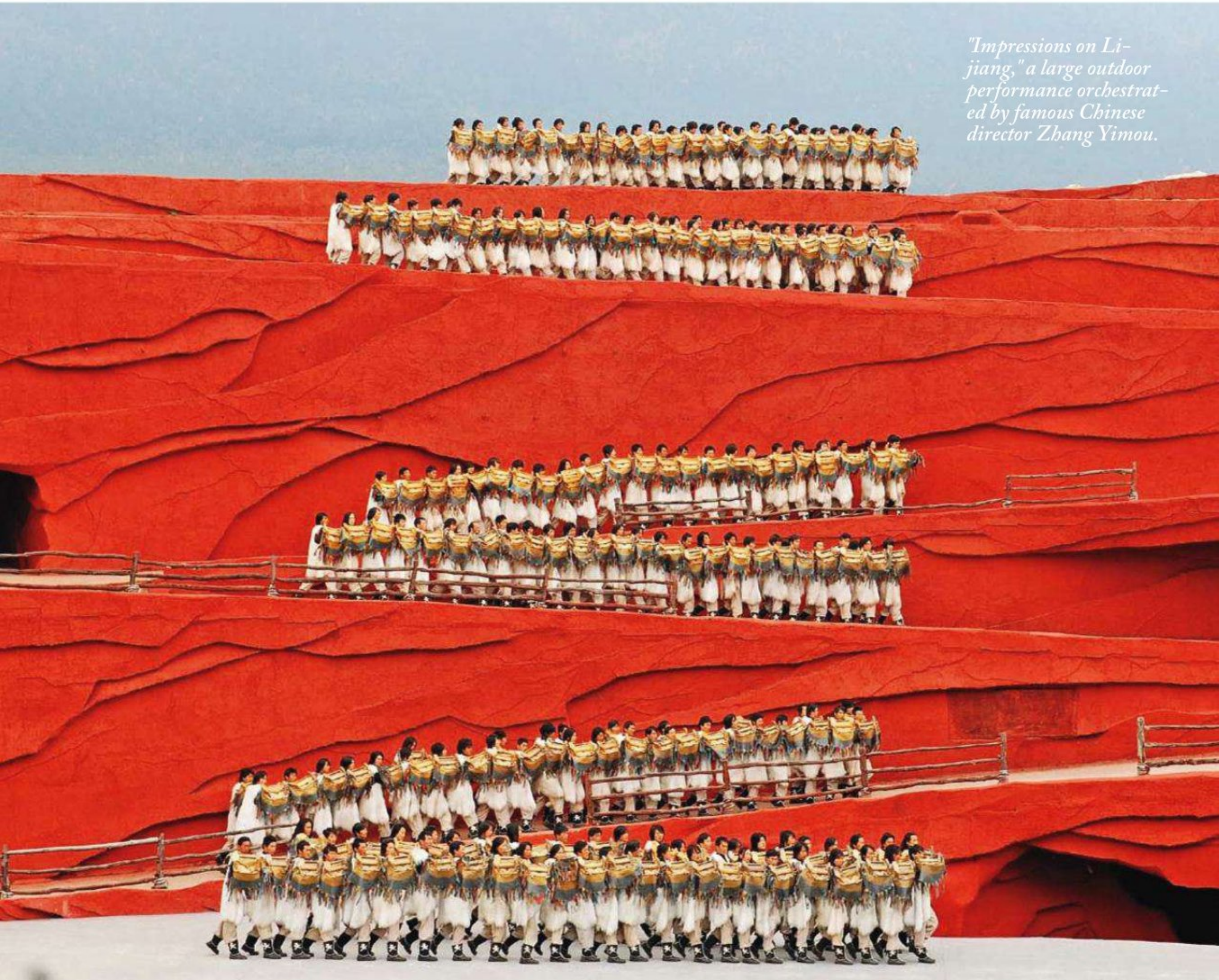
Lijiang Impressions

Text by Mu Mu
Photographs by Zhao Xu



"Words mean different things to different people," goes a Chinese saying. So many people have visited Lijiang, a well-known tourist city in Yunnan Province, that it's impossible to tell which description will ring truest in which ears.

Lijiang wins over the hearts of tourists in contrasting ways: Those who love hustle and bustle adore the urban areas, while those who long for natural landscapes inevitably find tranquility.



"Impressions on Lijiang," a large outdoor performance orchestrated by famous Chinese director Zhang Yimou.

The snow-capped Yulong Mountain is regarded as holy by locals.

Tips

1. There are myriad shops and stores, big and small, in Lijiang. Both men and women can find their favorites there. Nightlife is hottest around Sifang Street's bars.

2. If possible, travelers can go camping in Lashihai, where they can enjoy wetland and rural scenery, ride horses, sail, or learn about folklore of the Naxi ethnic group. Winter is the best season to admire the golden summit of Mt. Meili.

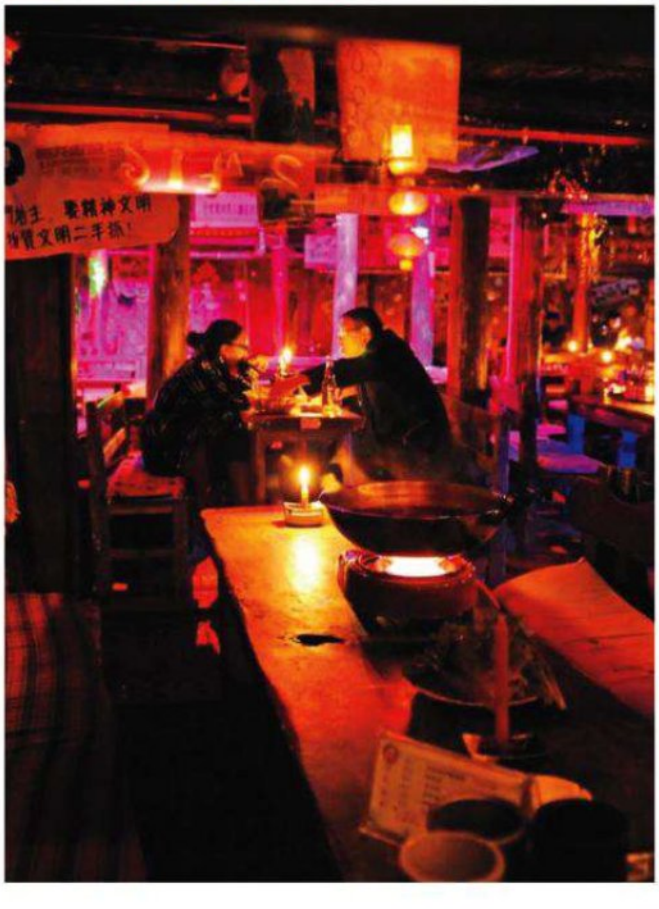
For 800 years, the ancient city of Lijiang has seen countless visitors come and go, and a few things have survived the fleeting centuries such as pebble-paved roads and clear streams winding through villages.

Perhaps nowhere else in the world treasures leisurely hours like Lijiang. One can easily find a guest house, bar, teahouse, or a restaurant where locals and visitors alike are reading, sleeping, eating, or daydreaming.

"We value sunlight more than time," a local claims.

Naxi Ancient Music, an attractive cultural heritage of Lijiang.

Carefree children.



Sleepless night in Lijiang.

It is true that visitors can easily lose themselves in such a singular place.

Zhao Xu's camera captured Lijiang from all sides: the snow-capped Yulong Mountain, nightlife in the bars, and crowds of people traversing Sifang Street. Dualistic life in this ancient town emulates night and day: One end of the street is busy and noisy while the other is silent and secluded. A female shop owner silently smiles the daylight hours away, but when night falls, she transforms into a rock singer in a bar.

Swans rest in a harbor.

An Avian Retreat

Text by Zhang Haitao

Photographs by Xu Xun

Of all of China's coastal cities, Rongcheng is the first to catch rays of the morning sun. However, its reputation as the home of whooper swans is even more notable. It's a city where man and nature demonstrate coexistence with a sustainable balance.

Every year in November, nearly ten thousand whooper swans fly thousands of miles from Mongolia and Russia to spend winter in Rongcheng, and leave in March the following year. Rongcheng has been dubbed the world's largest winter habitat for whooper swans and has become a rare place where humans can enjoy close contact with the graceful birds.

A formation of swans in flight.

Singing.

Swan Coast

Three species of swans live in China: mute swans and tundra swans along with the whooper, which remains Rongcheng's majority. Both in China and beyond, the whooper swan has become a symbol of grace, beauty, royalty, and dignity. It's not so easy to put a finger on the exact reasons why so many whooper swans choose Rongcheng specifically for their winter home, especially with their numbers increasing with each passing year. The most influential factors, however, are related to geography and climate conditions.

At the easternmost tip of the Shandong Peninsula, Rongcheng features a 500-kilometer-long coastline hosting plentiful aquatic creatures such as fish, shrimp, shellfish, and algae. It is considered one of China's richest cities in terms of marine resources. Rongcheng's warm, humid temperate monsoon climate keeps the average temperature at 12 degrees Celsius. Also, it has some of the best air and seawater quality in China, with its offshore water at and above state class II standards. Its pleasant climate, abundant food, crystal waters, and picturesque landscapes are all attractive not only to humans, but more so to whooper swans.

In winter, flocks of swans fly from the remote north to Rongcheng's coast. Typically, the transients stop at Moon Lake for a few days of rest before dispersing to bays, lakes, and reservoirs around Rongcheng, including Madao River, Sanggou Bay, Bahe Reservoir, Ludao Lake, and Shibao Bay. Each of these places is known as "Swan Lake" to their respective locals, and Moon Lake is the largest. The lake has a surface area of five square kilometers on the edge of the ocean, separated from the sea by a crescent-shaped sandy embankment. Its clear water is accented by the surrounding trees and reeds, and overgrown algae provide abundant food for swans staying there. On the mirror-esque surface, flocks of swans playfully chase each other and dance gracefully. When they take off, swan songs echoing through the hills add a dreamlike aura to the area.

Swan Scene

Tales related to the coexistence of people and swans are common in Rongcheng. There, the birds not only have sufficient food, but don't have to worry about poachers, making it an idyllic retreat. Some even frequent courtyards where local households allow them to share food with their domesticated fowl. In the event that lakes freeze over, locals take it upon themselves to feed the swans.

Rongcheng's municipal government enacted a series of regulations to protect not only the whooper swan, but other wildlife species by establishing the Rongcheng Association for Whooper Swan Protection. Additionally, it founded nature reserves such as Rongcheng State-Class Nature Reserve for Whooper Swans, Chengshantou State-Class Ocean Park, and Sanggou Bay Nature Reserve to preserve favorable living conditions for wildlife. The Rongcheng Whooper Swan Reserve is even equipped with a swan rescue center, an epidemic monitoring and testing center, and other conservation and research facilities. During the months when migratory birds are present, employees of the nature reserve monitor the fowl 24 hours a day to check for potential disease outbreaks.

On frozen days, the reserve also provides food to ensure the swans have enough to eat. Local farmers don't stop them from eating their crops, and the municipal government compensates growers for produce lost to the birds.

The swans combined with traditional alga-roofed residences and uncommon lifestyles of local fishermen have made Rongcheng grow into a popular destination for tourists and photographers from both China and abroad. Images depicting swans, residences, and the folk lifestyle have won prizes at both domestic and international photography contests. One in particular, *Swans in Snow* by prominent Jiangsu Province photographer Zhu Yongkang, took first prize at the 44th International Competition of Wildlife Photography. Ma Shimin, a local Rongcheng photographer, has taken awards at several domestic and international photography competitions.

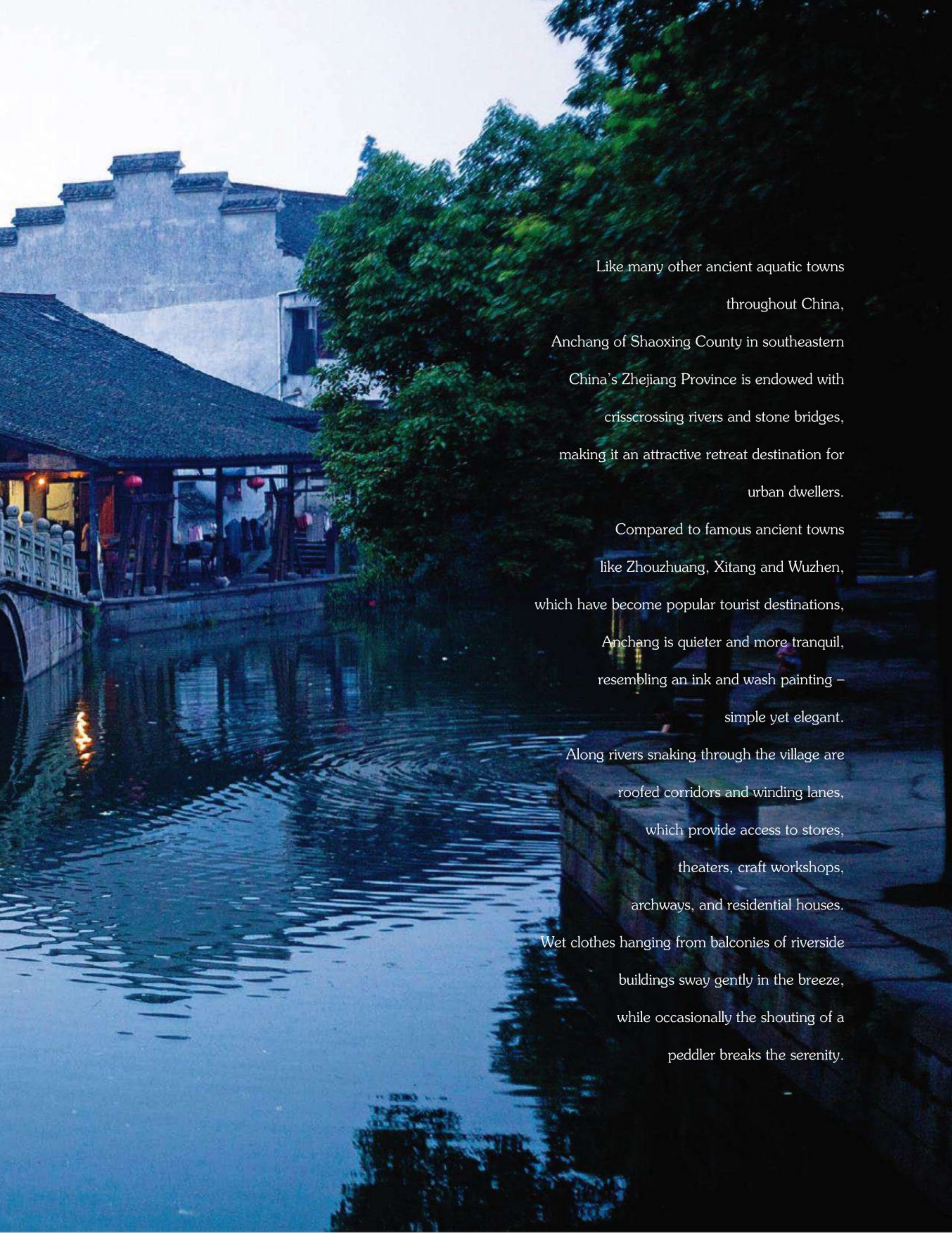
Currently, whooper swans can be found along most of the coastline around Rongcheng, from Chengshantou in the north to Jinghai Bay in the south. Additionally, tens of thousands of other species of birds including red-crowned cranes, mandarin ducks, wild geese, and teals also spend time in Rongcheng, creating a rarely-seen amalgamation of man and nature.

A flock of swans on the water.

Preserved Peace

Text and photographs by Lin Dihuan

Anchang at night.



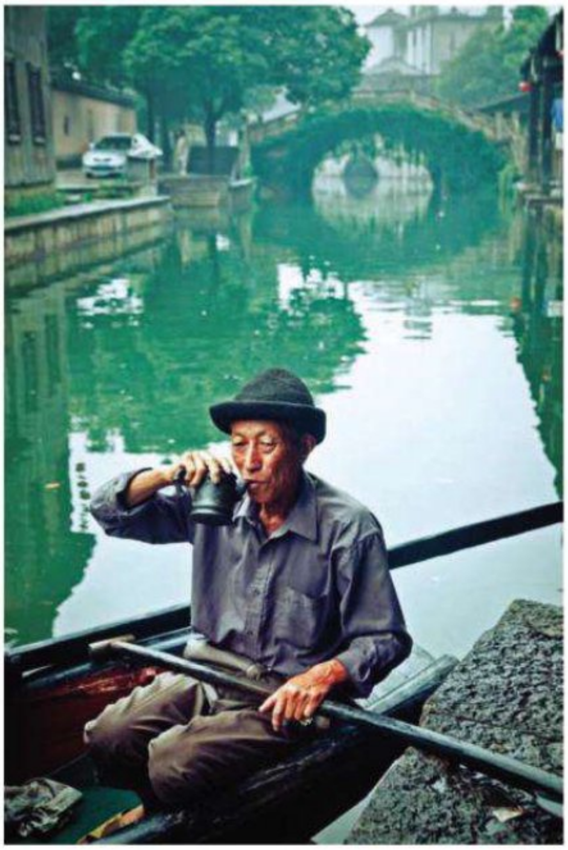
Like many other ancient aquatic towns throughout China, Anchang of Shaoxing County in southeastern China's Zhejiang Province is endowed with crisscrossing rivers and stone bridges, making it an attractive retreat destination for urban dwellers.

Compared to famous ancient towns like Zhouzhuang, Xitang and Wuzhen, which have become popular tourist destinations, Anchang is quieter and more tranquil, resembling an ink and wash painting – simple yet elegant.

Along rivers snaking through the village are roofed corridors and winding lanes, which provide access to stores, theaters, craft workshops, archways, and residential houses.

Wet clothes hanging from balconies of riverside buildings sway gently in the breeze, while occasionally the shouting of a peddler breaks the serenity.

A boatman sips from a teapot.



First built in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), Anchang was destroyed in warfare several times. However, that historical legacy starkly contrasts the meaning of its name: "peace and prosperity." The town was last reconstructed during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Since then, it has witnessed few changes, with most of its buildings still preserving authentic Ming and Qing style.

The intersecting canals across town appear and function like veins. Cruising down the meandering emerald rivers are ferries covered with bamboo-weaved awnings painted black to resist weathering. Boatmen usually wear triangular black felt caps and steer using both hands and feet.

The ferries pass under stone bridges providing pedestrian access across the rivers. The names of bridges, such as Fuyuan (literally "happiness and good luck") and Jieshan (literally "connecting kindness"), illustrate local attitudes about life. Though trampled by passersby day after day, year after year, hardy wild grass peeks up from between stones in the bridges.

Along the rivers are porticos of local residences, many of which double as restaurants serving homemade food. Under the eaves of the riverside eateries are chairs and wooden tables, carrying blue and white porcelain

A stone bridge covered with ivy.

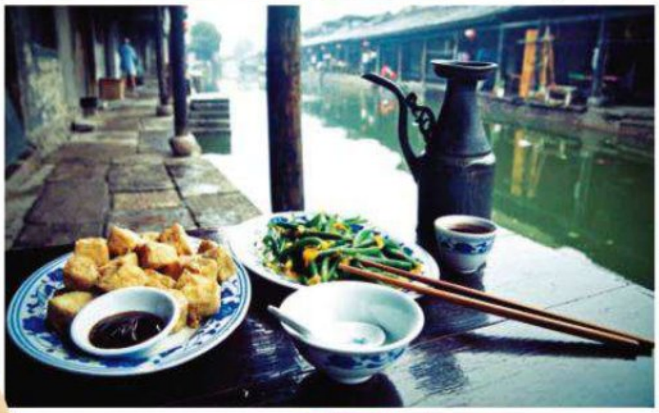
tableware. From the banks of the rivers, some old lanes weave into the distance, along which can be found suntanned boatmen, wrinkled old women, and children atop bamboo horses. The faint clap of wooden gates echoes down the lanes as residents come and go.

Luckier visitors can catch traditional operas performed on riverside stages and local weddings held on boats. In restaurants, one can find snacks like New Year cakes, sticky rice dumpling wrapped in leaves, and hand-pulled maltose. In such establishments, it is not uncommon to see a lonely old man with long beard smoking a copper tobacco pipe while sipping a cup of wine and munching on a plate of beans.

Many who have visited the ancient town plan to return later, so they can once again walk the stone-paved roads, revisit their favorite traditional houses and shops, and listen to the local Shaoxing dialect.

The town has changed little since I last visited three years ago. Riverside taverns still serve the exact same food and wine. I once again met sausage maker Bao Lin, who was still talkative, but increasing white hair in his beard evidenced his aging. The town's waterways were carrying more ferries. I happened to again take Wang Baoren's boat just as I did last time, and as we floated down the river, the town reconfirmed its unparalleled tranquility and peace.

A boatman greets some acquaintances.


A bottle of home-made wine, along with several local dishes, provides a comfortable afternoon.

Locals chat in a riverside store.

A local woman cross-stitches.

Travel Tips

How to Get There

The ancient town of Anchang lies at the northwest tip of Shaoxing County and borders Xiaoshan District of Hangzhou City. By car, you should exit the Shanghai-Hangzhou-Ningbo Expressway at Keqiao, which is only five kilometers away from Anchang. Buses leave Shaoxing Passenger Transport Center and North Bus Station for Anchang every five minutes between the hours of 6 a.m. and 5 p.m.

When to Visit

Anchang features a mild, humid climate, with an annual average temperature of 16.4 degrees Celsius. The best time to visit is during spring and summer, especially late spring when the weather is warm and flowers are in full bloom.

Where to Stay

Though there are hostels in Anchang, most tourists spend the night at hotels near Jiefang Road in the county seat of Shaoxing. Typically, each room runs 30-100 yuan a night.

What to Eat

Tourists shouldn't miss Anchang's smoked pork and sauced chicken. The local cuisine is characterized by an abundance of soy sauce. A widely-known product, Renchang Soy Sauce, has become a popular gift for housewives. Tourists can find the product at most local grocers.

Rime with Reason

Text by Wei Yao
Photographs by Wei Ming

Braving a world of minus 20 degrees Celsius.

When the air around you is minus 20 degrees Celsius (-4 degrees F), what will it take to appreciate natural scenery? Most of the time, spirits remain understandably low in chilly winds, and appetite for visual treats is hard to find. Still, at least one icy resident manages to touch its viewers consistently even on the coldest mornings: hard rime.

Popularly known as 'snow willow' or 'ice flower,' rime is a common natural phenomenon during northern China's brutally cold winters. It is white ice that forms when water droplets from fog freeze on the outer surface of objects, such as electrical wires and twigs. Jilin City of northeastern China's Jilin Province is the most renowned rime-spotting place in the country. Considered one of the four natural wonders of China, Jilin rime attracts healthy numbers of tourists every year.

Rugged Roads

January and February are the most common months to look for rime. For those curious enough to brave sub-zero temperatures, a weekend in Jilin is a worthwhile trip because even if visitors are deprived of the rime, they can enjoy other fantastic white scenery. In the middle of the region's Songhua River is a piece of land known as Wusong Island (literally Rime Island), in the suburbs of Jilin City. The islet is just downstream from a large reservoir. Since the Jilin stretch of the Songhua River never freezes, it produces substantial vapor, enabling prolific formations of rimes.

Hantun, a small village next to Wusong Island, is home to only several dozen households. But thanks to abundant tourism resources provided by the island, more than 10 families were able to open hotels, allowing tourists to experience features of the northeastern lifestyle such as authentic cuisine and famous heated brick beds. The family-run hotels have the capacity to host 1,000 tourists at a time. When we arrived, the locals explained that strong winds had prevented rime from forming for a few days.

A specific category of frost, rime is an accumulation of granular ice tufts on the windward sides of objects after fog or clouds are supercooled by the wind. Due to precise conditions the phenomenon requires, rime appears only occasionally and in varying locations. Every winter, more fortunate tourists are delighted when they happen upon it while others patiently wait for days. From the center of a ice-free section of the Songhua River, Wusong Island receives an abundance of vapor every morning, which makes the probability of finding rime there exponentially higher than elsewhere. However, if wind is too strong or the temperature isn't exactly right, rime is nowhere to be found.

The spectacular scene can only be created by nature.

A Gift from Above

The weather forecast predicted conditions which would make it impossible, so we were surprised to find rime on the first morning. At 6 a.m., before sunrise, rime hidden by the icy fog blanketing the river was only partially visible. When we reached the dock, the sun was just peeking above the horizon. The crimson sky made the island glow with an even greater appeal.

Appearing like a whole other world, virtually everything on the island from trees to houses even to horsehair was covered with rime. The ice on shrubs near the riverside was most abundant. Once again, nature provided spectacular images that could never be conceived by human power or imagination.

On the way back to Hantun Village, we saw rime quickly disappear in the wind, like changing scenes in a movie. After only a few hours, the scenery was drastically different. Snow flakes appeared to saturate the sky, but in reality it was rime blown off tree branches. Although some of the most memorable moments in life are fleeting, their beauty isn't any less magnificent.

Wusong Island covered in rime.

Happy Homes

For the duration of our journey, we stayed in the lovely Hantun Village. The family hotel at which we roomed was run by 28-year-old villager Zhao Yanfei. The cheerfully outgoing man works elsewhere and returns to his Hantun hotel only during winter. In his opinion, the best time for rime is not widely-accepted January and February, but rather November, just after Jilin's first snow. According to him, those lucky enough to catch it early experience its most profound beauty. Several years ago, when the tourist flow was smaller, he saw rime in November. The whole scene was untouched: rime on tree branches was light but plump, with soft mist covering the river.

That experience inspired Zhao to open a family hotel in Hantun. Now, his courtyard can accommodate 50 guests and he plans to expand it this spring. Growing numbers of visitors increasingly testify that Hantun is worthy of a visit. Nearly every resident hails from the Manchu ethnic group, and the village, known as Hongniluo City in ancient times, was a cradle of the Manchu people. As early as 5,000 years ago, Manchu ancestors began settling in this area and the remains of the ancient city walls can still be found in the village.

With such beautiful vistas, hospitable hosts, and filling food, visitors are often surprised to realize that they happened upon a winter paradise even when temperatures drop to numbing lows.

Dog sleds are popular forms of tourist transportation on Wusong Island.

Boarding a boat to Wusong Island.

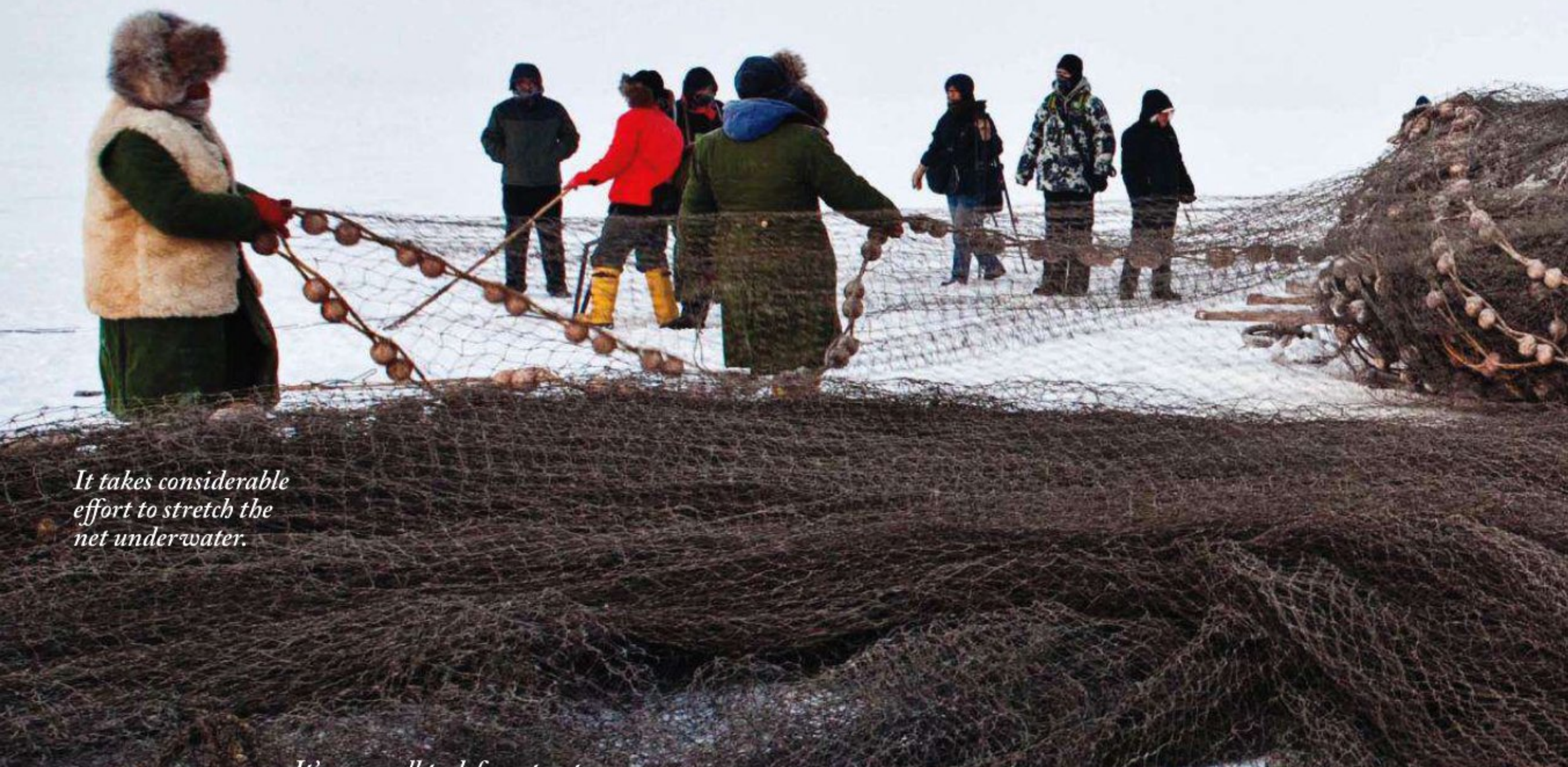
How to Get There:

Jilin City is accessible by both air and rail, from which buses shuttle to Hantun Village near Wusong Island.

Delicate rime.

Big Nets and Cold Fish

Text and photographs by Qiu Lei



It takes considerable effort to stretch the net underwater.

It's no small task for a tractor to pull the net across snow.

Last year, Chagan Lake's Winter Fishing Festival fell days after Christmas. Chagan is one of China's 10 largest freshwater lakes, and Jilin Province's biggest, and its fishing festival remains a grand occasion, although such events are rare in the 21st Century.

Their fishing methods have been handed down for 1,000 years since as early as the Liao Dynasty (907-1125). In 2008, Chagan Lake Winter Fishing was even designated as a national intangible cultural heritage. Some scholars believe that the fishery is the last of its kind in northern China.

Collective Fishing

At 4:30 a.m., thermometers on the surface of the lake read minus 30 degrees Celsius (-22 F). Before daybreak, fishermen were already working in earnest, pulling nets through the darkness.

Fifty-two fishermen made up the big team, preparing to cast a massive net, measuring 13 by 2,000 meters, into the lake covering 506 square kilometers. The team leader, known as the captain, decided where to cut the ice holes for the net.

The captain arrived three hours early to select the site for the holes. The team's first step involved drilling two rectangular ice holes 2,000 meters apart to pull the net in and out.

The second step produced a circle with the two holes representing six and twelve o'clock on a clock face, respectively. Smaller holes measuring 30 centimeters in diameter were drilled along the arcs between one and five o'clock and between seven and eleven, with each about 20 meters apart.

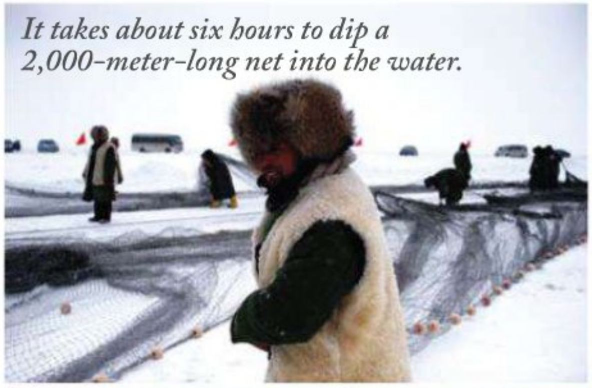
Next, they hung the net on two wooden poles, each measuring 20 meters, exactly the distance between the small holes. The poles went into the lake at the twelve o'clock hole, with one pointing towards one o'clock and the other towards eleven. The net dropped into the water with help of a metal sinker, and a piece of wood kept the other side afloat. A hooked anchor was employed to pull the pole from one hole to another, with both poles ultimately meeting at six o'clock.

The net was drawn out with a rope pulled by horses. The size of the catch couldn't be estimated until 90 percent of the net emerged from the hole.

It was 3:00 p.m. when the whole net was out.

Though simple, this fishing technique is quite efficient. Local fishermen set the Guinness record for a single catch of 104,500 kilograms, and soon outdid themselves with a 168,000-kilogram catch.

Such methods are no longer popular, but locals have developed the tradition into a tourism resource. Visitors come to witness the amazing fishing process, and are happy to pay more for fresh fish cooked at local restaurants.



It takes about six hours to dip a 2,000-meter-long net into the water.

Horses pull a fishing net weighing a dozen tons.

Digging the hole.

Working in the rising sun.

Sacrificial Ceremony

A sacrificial ceremony flavored with the Lamaism and Shamanism occurred on the lake prior to winter fishing in hopes of pleasing the lake god and "awakening the net."

Horns resounded over the lake as soon as the captain announced the commencement of the ceremony. Lamas circled an Ovoo and a holy flame three times with Buddhist sutras and other religious instruments in hand. They stopped at the table with offerings while chanting sutras.

The ceremony continued with a Chama dance performed by Shamanists with masks, holding tools to ward off evil spirits and pray for gook luck.

Then, fishermen in white sheepskin coats and deerskin caps took the stage, listening to sutras from the lama, who shook a bell with one hand and sprinkled holy water on the fishing net with the other. The captain knelt on the ice, dipped his finger in liquor, and sprinkled it towards heaven, earth, and the fishing net. He poured the liquor, bowed to heaven and earth, held the cup high above his head, and poured the liquor into the ice hole, while lamas chanted and threw the offerings into the icy water. The host of the ceremony fastened his *hada* (a silk ritual scarf) and ribbons to the pine branches of the Ovoo. Participants then threw cheese and candies into the air. Drums beat, horns blew, and dancing commenced.

The whole ceremony lasted for about 30 minutes. It has been handed down since the Liao Dynasty, when the royal family spent their springs on the shores of Chagan, fishing and hunting. Historically, a similar ceremony was held before a feast honoring imperial princes and court ministers.

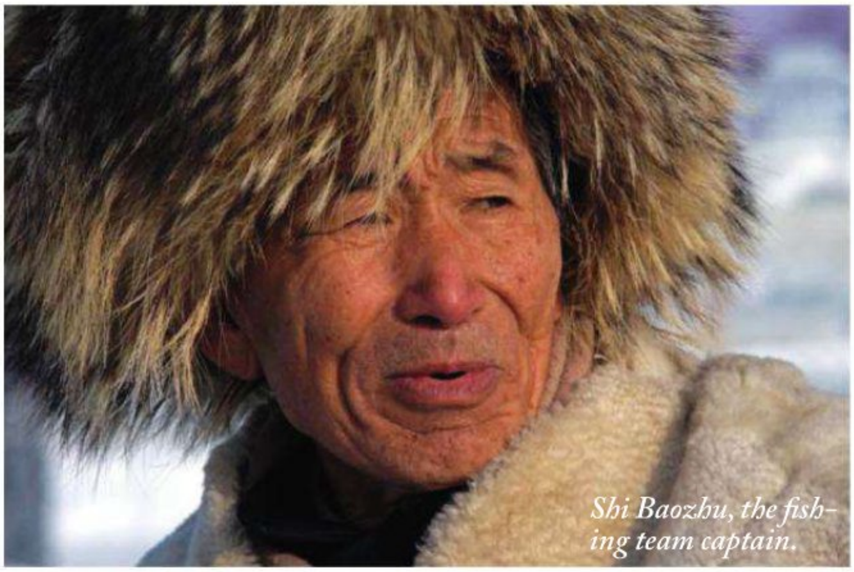
Big fish always emerge at the last moment. Tourists can take their pick, but prices here are higher than at the market.

The Captain

His name is Shi Baozhu.

One cannot become a captain without rich fishing experience. "A good captain can judge the location of fish by measuring the direction and force of wind," explains Bai Riguang, curator of the local Museum of Fishing and Hunting Culture. The captain's experience usually decides the size of the harvest of winter fishing. No wonder he is regarded as the soul of the fishermen.

Shi Baozhu is famous around Chagan Lake. Different from most of his peers who tend to be shy and stoic, Shi is bold and expressive.



Shi Baozhu, the fishing team captain.

"I have been invited to Xinjiang and Mongolia to share my fishing experiences," he smiles. "Unfortunately, I cannot pass them to my two sons, who earn better pay working for the government."

"I'm satisfied with the course of my life," he continues. "Five generations live together. I was married at 15. My only lingering wish is to encourage younger generations to learn and study, so that they can help develop fishing methods down here. We've bred so many fish here, and my hands can only do so much. We need mechanization, which I should learn from the younger generation."

Spring Festival Set Menu at Swissôtel Beijing

18 January – 17 February, 2011

Swissôtel Beijing is welcoming you and your family to celebrate the New Year with style at Happy Valley Chinese Restaurant. Our Hong Kong Chef Jacky Chan will prepare a different of set menu of most popular food delicacies.
Set menu starts from RMB 258.00 per person
Special compliment: during Chinese New Year period (2 February – 5 February, 2011) dine in the Happy Valley Chinese Restaurant can taste free traditional Beijing dumplings (4 pieces per person)
For reservations and more information: (86 10) 65532288 – 2146 or 2148
E-mail: F&BOffice.beijing@swissotel.com
www.swissotel.com/beijing

"Landing to Bed" Promotion at Swissôtel Beijing

An Executive Club Room or Suite may just be the ideal way to treat yourself either business or pleasure. This exclusive treatment offers a higher level of personalized service, premium accommodation, exclusive lounge serving breakfast, tea/coffee & soft drinks all day and evening cocktails, high speed internet access, pressing, meeting room, local phone calls, generous discount on laundry, restaurants, business centre facilities, etc.
From now on till February 28, 2011, either call Swissôtel Beijing or log on their website – www.swissotel.com/beijing, to take advantage of a special promotion rate – starts from RMB900.00 per room per night* at the Executive Club room, you will enjoy the privileges of Swiss Executive Floor.
For more information: (86 10) 65532288.

*Subject to 15% service charge
*Subject to availability
*This offer cannot be booked in conjunction with any other promotions or discounts.

China World Summit Wing, Beijing Offers CHI, The Art of Well-being Package

China World Summit Wing, Beijing invites guests to discover the art of well-being in one of the city's largest private treatment suites and savour healthy cuisine at the peak of Beijing. This CHI, The Art of Well-being package is available at RMB3,800 for single occupancy or RMB5,300 for double occupancy in an Executive Room, and at RMB6,000 for single occupancy or RMB7,500 for double occupancy in a Premier Suite. For further information or to make a reservation, please call the hotel (86 10) 8571 6688 or e-mail reservations.cwsw@shangri-la.com. Alternatively, bookings can be made online at www.shangri-la.com.

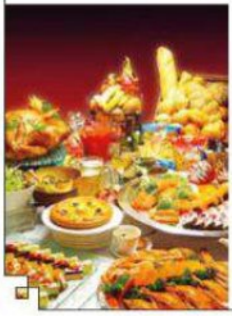
Shangri-la's Kerry Center Hotel, Beijing Offers Chinese New Year Treats

Guests can usher in the Year of Rabbit with a line-up of festive goodies, especially prepared by Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing.
Nian Gao, a traditional festive dish made of glutinous rice, is available in shapes such as fish, rabbit and golden coin. In addition, packed in cloth-lined cases, hampers, containing Nian Gao, premium wine, health delicacies and other festive goodies, make the perfect gift idea.
For heartfelt family reunions, Chinese Executive Chef Lo invites you to enjoy a range of set menus featuring Cantonese delicacies. Early Bird promotions are available for advance reservations.

For more information and reservations, please contact at (86 10) 8565 2188.

Oasis Coffee Shop International Food Collection!

Enjoy Oasis Coffee Shop great value with one of the benefit buffet selection in Beijing featuring more than 100 different dishes including salads, seafood, beef, sushi, pastas, hot dishes and desserts with unlimited beer, soft drinks, coffee and tea.
Lunch: RMB 118.00 net per person
Dinner: RMB 148.00 net per person
Pay four get one free (dinner only).
Lunch: 11:30am-2:00pm (Mon.-Fri.), 11:30am-2:30pm (Sat.-Sun.)
Dinner: 5:30-10:00pm
Valid until: February 28, 2011
Not applicable to any discount program or cash vouchers
Venue: Oasis Coffee Shop, 1st floor, Holiday Inn Beijing Downtown
Tel: (86 10) 68338822 ext. 7116



Legendale Hotel Beijing 'Nian Gao' for upcoming Year of the Rabbit

To celebrate the Chinese New Year, this upcoming year of the Rabbit with the traditional home-made 'Nian Gao' from Legendale Hotel Beijing. Choose your favorite designed 'Nian Gao' Box Set at RMB188 and RMB168, which feature in a set of a big fish or the Golden Brick symbolizing long life and good fortune for family or business celebrations.

Nian Gao gift box can be purchased from 18 January to 17 February, 2011 at the hotel lobby or Macau Chinese Restaurant.
Call Nian Gao Hotline now at 010 8511 3388 ext. 8968.

An Intimate Valentine Weekend at Hilton Beijing Wangfujing

Experience an unimaginable intimate Valentine's Day at Hilton Beijing Wangfujing during the Valentine weekend (February 12 – 14, 2011).
With rates stating from RMB2,199 +15%, couples can cherish an overnight stay in a Deluxe Room, one of Beijing's largest hotel rooms and pamper each other with what "cupid" would highly recommend during this special day:

Happy Valentine's Day

*A rebalancing and renewing 60-minute spa treatment at The Spa
*Romantic candlelit dinner with a nice bottle of wine served at the privacy of your guest room
*And linger on the celebration with a sumptuous Hilton Breakfast the next day
Please call (86 10) 5812 8888 ext. 8411 or send email to wangfujing@hilton.com for more information.

Valentine's Day

Love is in the air.
Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun invites you to celebrate this Valentine's Day, with your loved one for a romantic candlelight dinner. A perfect romantic set dinner for 2 is specially prepared ranging from a sumptuous cuisine to a heart warming melting chocolate cake for desserts.
For further information and reservations, please call (86 10)5993 8888 ext 2300

"Exchange of Hearts" at Steak Exchange Restaurant & Bar

This Valentine's Day, show your appreciation and treat that special someone to a romantic meal at the award winning Steak Exchange Restaurant and Bar at InterContinental Beijing Financial Street. Specially prepared by Chef Bill, the Valentine's Day set menu comprises of a tantalising 4-course extravaganza guaranteed to seduce and satisfy discerning epicureans at CNY 999 +15% per couple. The prime cuts of 250-day grain fed Australia Angus Beef is surely included on the menu, so as the surprisingly dessert.
For reservations, please call 5852 5920 or 5852 5921.
Steak Exchange Restaurant & Bar
5th floor of InterContinental Beijing Financial Street
No.11 Financial Street Xicheng Dist. Beijing

在這里，讀懂千年中國！
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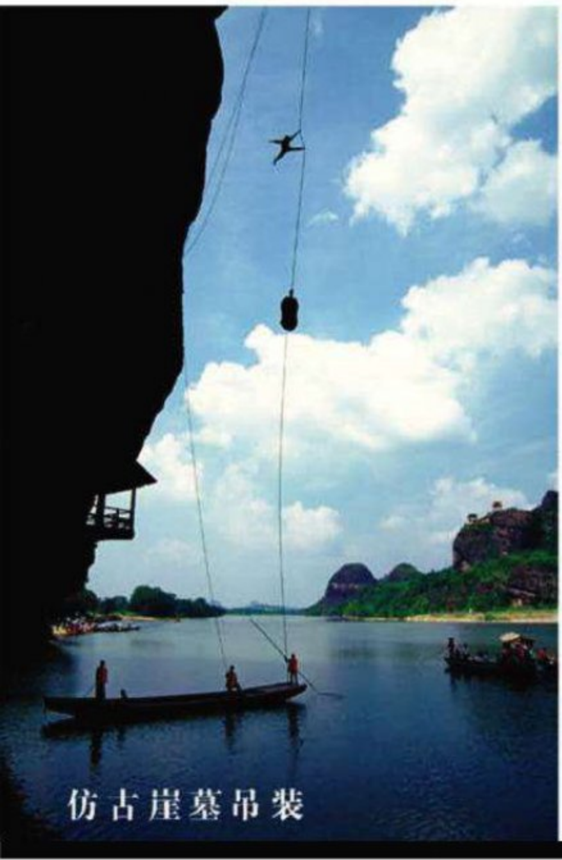
http://www.longhushan.com.cn

仙水岩景色
The view of Xianshui Rock

There Exists A Millennium Place in China!

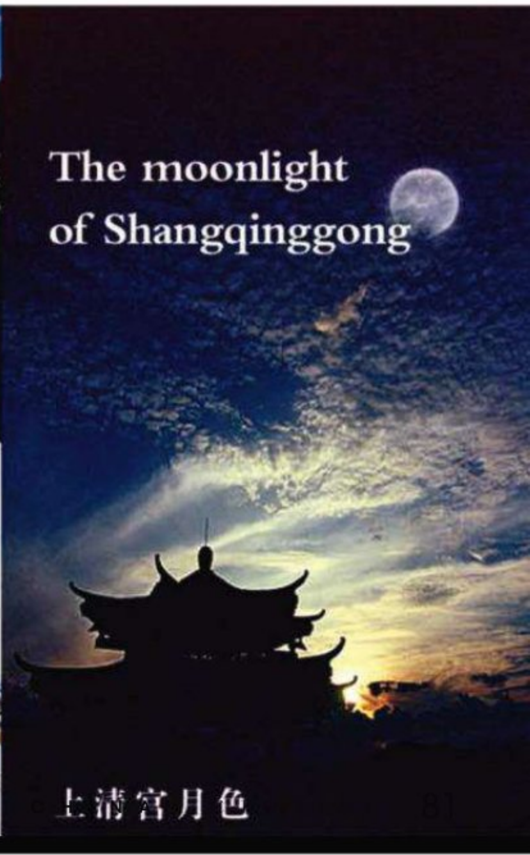
--the Taoist Holy Place in China the World Geopark Dragon and Tiger Mountain in Jiangxi



仿古崖墓吊装

Taoist Temple 山顶道观

The new tourist centre
新游客中心



The moonlight of Shangqinggong

上清宫月色

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